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Israeli Elite Units since 1948

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Dedication
To the paratroop fallen in the Jordan Valley, and their families—whose sacrifice allowed others to live in peace.

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Editor's Note
Since written Hebrew script does not distinguish between capitals and 'lower case' characters in the European manner, direct transliterations of Hebrew titles and terms are printed in SMALL CAPITALS throughout the text. Since Anglicised Hebrew uses mainly American, rather than British spellings, this convention has been maintained here.

The First Military Elite

'*We are here to found a Jewish Army.*'
Capt. Orde Wingate, 13 September 1938: SNS Jewish Sergeants' Course, Kibbutz Ein Herod.

In 1929, and later in 1936, Palestinian Arabs initiated violent riots against the Jews and British to further their own nationalistic aspirations. In 1929 the HAGANAH (Israel's 'pre-statehood' underground army) found itself incapable of conducting military operations beyond low-level defensive efforts. In 1936, accepting that they did not possess the means successfully to defend Jewish life and property, the British established a special Jewish Police Force or NOTRIM ('Guards'), which consisted of 'Supernumerary Police' and highly mobile 'Settlement Police'. Virtually every NOTER was a member of the HAGANAH, and a careful balance between divided loyalties ensued. The 'Settlement Police' were manipulated by the HAGANAH into an élite force. Their 'illegal' commander was Yitzhak Sadeh, a military visionary, who trained the NODEDOT—as they became known—in the art of unconventional warfare. The NODEDOT specialised in mobility and surprise attacks; the Arabs feared them greatly. The NOTRIM provided the HAGANAH with its cadre of combat-experienced personnel, attracting the élite of Palestine's Jewish youth—men like Moshe Dayan and Yigal Allon, who began their military careers as NOTRIM.

The riots of 1936 and the establishment of the NOTRIM broadened the outlook of the HAGANAH; and 1937 saw the establishment of the FO'SH (Hebrew abbreviation for PLUGOT SADEH or 'Field Companies'). The FO'SH was a mobilised élite strike force whose members were hand-picked by Yitzhak Sadeh for their intelligence, strength and dedication. Sadeh was the ideal commander for such a force; his eccentric but comforting unconventionality earned the devotion of his men, and the affectionate nickname of 'HAZAKEN', the 'Old Man'.

A Special Night Squad led by a British NCO set out from Kibbutz Hanita to patrol along the Iraq Petroleum Pipeline, September 1938. Note variety of civilian and military dress worn, as well as assortment of SMLEs and shotguns carried. (HAGANAH Archives)

The FO'SH became the commando arm of the HAGANAH; and an entity unto itself. Sadeh created FO'SH topographical and educational units, as well as a small but extremely effective Arabic-speaking intelligence service. By March 1938 the FO'SH boasted over 1,500 fully trained fighters divided into 13 regional groups. They carried stolen and semi-legal British SMLEs, grenades and rifles 'liberated' from Arab guerrillas, and some small arms produced in improvised HAGANAH armaments factories. The FO'SH openly confronted the Arabs in battle, attacking their villages in swift raids, taking full advantage of their mobility. The Arabs, used to

unco-ordinated mob attacks, could not defeat the FO'SH in battle.

Between 1936 and 1939, hundreds of Jewish 'stockade and tower' settlements were set up to populate areas throughout Palestine. One observer impressed by the rapid construction of these 'living and working' fortifications was Capt. Orde Charles Wingate, a young British officer posted to Palestine in 1936. A bible-thumping eccentric fired with Zionist zeal, Wingate was entrusted with the defence of the Iraqi Petroleum Company pipeline, the target of Arab guerrilla attacks. He formed a joint British-Jewish unit, known as the Special Night Squads, to combat these guerrilla forces. The HAGANAH was at first reluctant to co-operate with the British, but Wingate's sincerity and support for Zionism convinced them. He was to be seen wandering the fields of Upper Galilee alone, clutching two rifles, a bible, and a Hebrew-English dictionary.

Wingate hand-picked his men from the ranks of the NOTRIM. 'Surprise', he argued, 'was a weapon to be respected', and he trained the Jewish fighters to form mobile ambushes. British practical support for the SNS was minimal, so Wingate co-operated illegally with the HAGANAH, reinforcing his patrols with FO'SH regulars. It was a highly successful force, virtually ending the Arab attacks on the pipeline. Most importantly, Wingate taught the Jewish fighters the potential of a highly trained élite; and the art of improvisation—utilising the resources available to their maximum ability.

Two Jewish sergeants direct the battle at Dabburiyah, the SNS's largest military engagement in 1938. Note khaki sweater with British sergeant's chevrons, and Mauser 7.63mm pistol. (HAGANAH Archives)

The British viewed Wingate as a security risk, and the SNS were disbanded in 1938. In 1939 the FO'SH was disbanded as well, to create a larger mobilised force known as the HI'SH (HEYL SADEH or 'Field Force'). Many believed, however, that HAGANAH and Zionist leaders had feared that FO'SH might develop into a potentially threatening autonomous élite.

The PAL'MACH

The outbreak of the Second World War found the HAGANAH supporting the British, even though the infamous 'White Paper' of 17 May 1939 halted immigration just when European Jews most desperately needed sanctuary. Although much British sympathy lay with the Arabs, they realised that the Jews were their most reliable allies in the Middle East. MI4 ran a training school (designated ME 102) for Jewish agents to be dropped into Nazi Germany, and a special relationship developed between the SOE (Special Operations Executive) and the HAGANAH. The SOE provided the fledgling HAGANAH with weapons, training, and funding, while the HAGANAH provided linguistic experts and SHA'I operatives[1]. SHA'I agents and FO'SH veterans received commando training from the British for spectacular missions, which nearly included a 'scrubbed' HAGANAH sabotage raid on the Romanian oil fields at Ploesti in late 1940.

When the Allied situation in the Middle East deteriorated the HAGANAH and the British formed a special guerrilla-type force to operate behind German lines should they invade Palestine. In May 1941 the PAL'MACH (Hebrew abbreviation for 'Strike Companies') was formed under the command of Yitzhak Sadeh. The PAL'MACH's two parallel objectives were the defence of the YISHUV (the Jewish community of Palestine) from the Arabs, and defence of Palestine from Axis invasion.

[1]The intelligence and counter-espionage arm of the HAGANAH, and the forebear of the MOSSAD.

In the latter case the PAL'MACH was to disrupt German lines of communication, and render enemy airfields inoperable. They were trained as guerrillas to launch sharp attacks in small units; and they became expert at demolitions and intelligence-gathering. Harsh commando training provided few other rewards. Recruitment was conducted in absolute secrecy, and Sadeh and his subordinates carefully screened each potential PAL'MACHNIK. The British happily refrained from incorporating the PAL'MACH into the British Army, and in exchange PAL'MACH personnel files remained in HAGANAH possession. Just two weeks after its inception, the PAL'MACH went into action against the Vichy French in Lebanon and Syria.

A hundred PAL'MACH fighters, mainly from the élite 'Arab Platoon' or SHACHAR, infiltrated various towns in Lebanon and Syria, where they assisted Free French agents in covert operations. SHACHAR's combined intelligence skills and behind-the-lines concept of military action personified the élite status of the PAL'MACH. British officers were so impressed with the men and women of SHACHAR that officers were quoted as saying that 'every man equals a battalion'. At about this time, British Maj. Anthony Palmer set out in a small boat, the *Sea Lion*, with 23 PAL'MACH demolitions experts to destroy the oil refineries at Tripoli. The boat disappeared without trace, with all hands lost. The loss of 'the 23' was a serious blow for the PAL'MACH; nevertheless, military operations continued.

The PAL'MACHNIKs proved to be excellent scouts, acting as guides to the advancing Allied forces in Syria—among them Moshe Dayan, who lost an eye battling the Vichy French. When Yigal Allon and a PAL'MACH patrol captured a bridge spanning the Litani River and four POWs, a colonel from the Australian 7th Division promised to recommend the PAL'MACHNIKs for decorations: Allon politely declined, asking instead to be allowed to keep the prisoners' captured weapons. The colonel not only agreed, but offered Allon a larger pile of arms captured from the French. They were used a few years later against the British.

By 1943, the PAL'MACH boasted over 1,000 fighters. It even had a naval service, the PAL'YAM ('Sea Companies') with courses in naval sabotage, amphibious landing, naval transport, and deep-sea operations; and an air service, the PAL'AVIR ('Air Companies') with pilots trained in gliders and light transports. A PAL'MACH 'German Platoon' (or 'Middle East Commando') was formed from German and Austrian Jews who were trained as German soldiers, proficient in all types of Wehrmacht weaponry. Had the Germans reached Palestine, they would have formed a 'fifth column'; in the event they were used as intelligence agents to infiltrate POW camps. Thirty-two male and female parachutists were trained to jump into central Europe to instigate Jewish resistance: most, like the heroine Hanah Szenesh, were captured, tortured and executed. Co-operation was temporary, however: on VE Day, the PAL'MACH mobilised its forces against the British.

A squad from the PAL'MACH's HAREL Brigade engage the Arab Legion near Jerusalem, July 1948. The sniper fires a Lee Enfield Mk.IV fitted with sniper-scope. Note US ammunition pouches and British paratroop helmet. (IDF Archives)

The PAL'MACH was the HAGANAH's field laboratory, where new systems of training and operation were tested. Most important to the PAL'MACH was the principle of leadership: officers treated their men as brothers in arms, leading by example, not privilege. The PAL'MACH 'manual' was imagination and improvisation; and although the PAL'MACHNIK was trained to fight in company and even battalion strengths, the ultimate PAL'MACH unit remained one soldier and his rifle.

When the PAL'MACH sprang into action against the British in spectacular fashion in late 1945, it took great care to attack military targets only. This policy was based on the sacred HAGANAH and later IDF principle of TOHAR HANESHEK or 'purity of

arms'. Most of the PAL'MACH's operations in 1945–47 took the form of assistance to illegal immigrants breaking through the British blockade. Protesting against the blockade, the PAL'MACH attacked all 11 supposedly heavily guarded bridges leading into Palestine on the night of 17–18 June 1946, destroying ten of them. On 10 October 1946, 250 PAL'MACH commandos attacked the detention camp at Atlit, freeing scores of prisoners. It should be stressed that PAL'MACH military co-operation with the IRGUN and LEHI terror factions was minimal; the PAL'MACH even captured 'wanted' fighters from these factions, and turned them over to the British CID.

After Independence

When the UN partitioned Palestine into Jewish and Arab states, the true war for Israel's existence began. Arab bands immediately attacked Jewish settlements, while the British (who maintained a 100,000-man garrison in Palestine) confiscated HAGANAH weapons. The PAL'MACH, the HAGANAH's only mobilised force, found itself engaged in full-scale war, greatly outnumbered and with the barest minimum of arms. By the end of 1947, the HAGANAH armoury consisted of only 10,073 rifles, 1,900 machine guns, 440 light machine guns, and 720 mortars to defend the 600,000-strong YISHUV.

The Israel Defense Forces (TZAVA HAGANAH L'YISRAEL, or 'TZAHAL') were created on 31 May 1948, consisting of eight brigades. Complementing this force were three PAL'MACH brigades commanded by Yigal Allon and divided along territorial zones of operation: YIFTACH Bde.—three battalions operating in eastern Galilee; HAREL Bde.—three battalions operating in the Jerusalem area; and HANEGEV Bde.—four battalions, including the élite jeep battalion 'Negev Beasts', and an HQ battalion which controlled all naval, air, and commando companies. There were also 500 women fighters in full-time PAL'MACH service, who fought on all fronts with great courage, skill, and distinction.

Throughout the War of Independence the PAL'MACH provided the spearhead of Israel's forces in battle. The YIFTACH Bde. was instrumental in the capture of Safed from the seasoned regulars of Fawzi al-Kaukji's 'Arab Liberation Army' after savage fighting. In and around Jerusalem the

Firing a jeep-mounted Boys .55 anti-tank rifle, a SHU'ALEI SHIMSHON crew engage Egyptian armour in the Negev Desert during Operation 'Ten Plagues', October 1948. The three arrows marking on the jeep is particular to IDF Southern Command. (IDF Archives)

Posing by his 'sandwich' armoured car on the 'Burma Road' towards Jerusalem, a PAL'MACHNIK from the PORTZIM Battalion displays typical PAL'MACH kit, including tan-khaki fatigues, Arab *kefiyeh* worn as a scarf, woollen 'cap comforter', and Czech K98 7.92mm Mauser rifle. (HAGANAH Archives)

HAREL Bde., commanded by Yitzhak Rabin,[1] faced the soldiers of Abd al-Kader al-Husseini and the Arab Legion; this region provided the site of the heaviest fighting of the war, at Kastel overlooking the Jerusalem road. In both these actions, the fighting was restricted to close-quarter combat, with no room to demonstrate the PAL'MACH's special talents. It was in the Negev Desert that the PAL'MACH was able to prove its élite military potential. In the campaign in the south against the Arab Legion and the Egyptian Army, the HANEGEV Bde. mounted swift attacks by 'commandos' in jeeps fitted with MG34 light machine guns and PIAT anti-tank weapons. These units, most notably the 'Negev Beasts', disrupted enemy communications with lightning raids, and assisted conventional HAGANAH and IDF attacks with reconnaissance and intelligence-gathering missions. Also operating in the area was the GIVA'ATI Infantry Brigade's élite 54th Reconnaissance Battalion, known as 'Samson's Foxes'. This unit, equipped with jeeps and M3 half-tracks took Britain's wartime Long Range Desert Group as its model; and, together with the HANEGEV Bde., captured Beersheba and El-Arish, and actually founded the city of Eilat on the Red Sea in a race against the cease-fire clock.

[1]One of the five PAL'MACH commanders to become IDF Chiefs of Staff: Yitzhak Rabin, Haim Bar-Lev, David Elazar, Mordechai Gur, Rafael Eitan.

The Paratroops

From 'Unit 101' to the Mitla Pass

Although the PAL'MACH had been an intrinsic element in Israel's struggle for independence, it was disbanded in 1949 to prevent it from becoming a politically potent military élite. The military need for special units remained obvious, however; and in that same year 'Major' Yoel Palgi,[1] one of the 32 British-trained parachutists who had jumped into central Europe, was summoned to form a 'paratroop commando' unit.

The first paratroop force was made up of those who had jumped with the British in the Second World War, graduates of the HAGANAH paratroop course in Czechoslovakia, and ex-PAL'MACHNIKS. Their beginning was shaky, at best; no training facilities existed, and discipline was so lax that morning roll-call was a rare event! Luckily the fledgling paratroopers received some outstanding volunteers, whose leadership and example forged the unit into a cohesive military force. Notable among these recruits were Karl Kahana, an Austrian veteran of the LRDG, and Marcel Tuvias, ex-French Foreign Legion. Kahana was the professional who refined the Unit, while Tuvias, 'the endorser', battered those failing to 'fall into line'. This unique combination, together with new commander Maj. Yehudah Harari, (ex-IRGUN, and former Jewish Brigade officer) made the paratroops into a potential fighting élite.

To increase the quality of his soldiers, Harari literally 'kidnapped' men from other units. Training fatalities lowered morale to dangerous levels,

[2]Palgi had been captured by the Gestapo, tortured, and escaped certain death by jumping off the train to the gas chambers.

Sami Rafael (right) shakes the hand of Yeshayahu Dar, whom he had just saved when his 'chute caught up on a C-46's tail. Sami wears British battledress, adorned with a light red instructor's lanyard, early cloth parachutist wings worn above left breast pocket, and yellow scarf. The HEYL RAGLIM (infantry) beret badge is worn on the dark maroon paratroop beret. (IDF Archives)

however, and many paratroopers demanded transfers. Nevertheless, by 1950 the first 'behind the lines' jump exercise was conducted with impressive results. In 1952 the unsafe C-46 transport was replaced by some C-47 Dakotas; new parachutes arrived—as did new, highly motivated recruits selected for their high IQs, athletic abilities, and mental stability. Of the group of 70 'volunteers' reaching the paratroops in 1953, only one was a native born Israeli; the paratroops became a 'Tower of Babel', where over 40 languages were spoken, and it took the relentless efforts of Harari and his deputy Capt. Aharon Davidi to forge the TZANHANIM into a capable unit. It was, however, untested in combat; and in 1953 it was unable to meet Israel's immediate security threat—Arab infiltrators.

In August 1951 the IDF General Staff decided to form an élite unit to secure Israel's frontiers, which then had a certain 'Wild West' flavour. Known as

The paratroops' second and most influential commander, Maj. Yehuda Harari (centre, standing with beret) poses with the graduates of the IDF's first jump instructors' course, 1950. The jump instructors wear British X-Type parachutes, and paratroop helmets adorned with white stencilled parachutist wings. Harari wears a maroon beret with TZAHAL beret badge. (IDF Archives)

Paratroop officers discuss the successful completion of Operation 'ELKAYAM', 30 August 1955. Note Australian-style 'slouch hat' and Kibbutz 'KOVA TEMBEL' ('fool's cap'); and '37-type and indigenous pouches carrying ammunition for the UZI 9mm SMG. (IDF Archives)

890th Paratroop Battalion officers pose with Chief of Staff Lt.Gen. Moshe Dayan and OC Southern Command Maj.Gen. Asaf Simchoni following Operation 'EGED', November 1955. *Standing left to right*: Lt. Meir Har-Zion, Maj. 'Arik' Sharon, Lt.Gen. Dayan, Capt. Dani Matt, Lt. Moshe Efron, and Maj.Gen. Asaf Simchoni. *Kneeling, left to right*: Capt. Aharon Davidi, Lt. Ya'akov Ya'akov, and Capt. 'Raful' Eitan. (IDF Archives)

'Unit 30', it consisted of conscript 'volunteers' together with Bedouin and Circassian scouts; its task was to seek out and engage Arab infiltrators, mainly in the southern part of Israel. 'Unit 30' was small, never exceeding the strength of two platoons; it nevertheless managed to make a name for itself. Its fighters were masters of camouflage and long-range reconnaissance. The IDF of those days had done no planning on how to integrate 'special forces' on a long term basis, however, and 'Unit 30' was disbanded in 1952.

Between 1949 and 1953 the IDF increased in size, though not in quality. It was still in a period of development, and found itself ill-prepared to meet the challenge posed by the infiltrators: between 1949 and 1952 there were over 3,000 such incidents. The IDF responded by creating a small commando force, to give a lead which other units could follow. The unit was not meant to be a large conventional force, but a 'partisan' group able to cross the frontiers undetected and carry out harsh reprisals. In August 1953 a 24-year-old reserve major was summoned back to active duty: his name was Ariel 'Arik' Sharon—and the IDF's infamous 'Unit 101' was born.

Unit 101

Sharon was given a free hand to recruit his men, mainly from among those dissatisfied with the routine of 'spit and polish' military service. They flocked to Sharon, whose informality typified the unit's aura of daring and independence. The men were encouraged to be original and to use their initiative. They wore what they pleased, and carried a wide assortment of weaponry including the 'Tommy-gun', MP-40, and Molotov cocktail'. Unit 101's most famous soldier was Meir Har-Zion, a NA'HA'L reconnaissance scout with extraordinary combat and navigational skills.

There was no saluting at Camp 'STAPH', the home of this secretive unit, and relations between commander and soldiers were informal. The golden rule was that 'no one returned to base unless the mission was carried out'. The men trained constantly, utilising everything from beer bottles to overhead pigeons as targets; and explosions were heard around the clock. After two months of collective training, Unit 101's 40 men craved battle, and squads were despatched on cross-border raids. On missions, the men usually wore civilian clothing, carried no radio, had no doctor; such conditions created the unique leadership cadre associated with Unit 101—like the PAL'MACH before them, personified by the battle cry 'Follow Me!' Sharon celebrated each squad's return from a mission with a feast of delicacies.

Unit 101 conducted dozens of daring raids against Egyptian and Jordanian targets. On 13

October 1953 two Israeli children were brutally murdered by Arab infiltrators. The Jordanian village of Kibya, an Arab Legion outpost, was selected for a reprisal. It would be Unit 101's most notorious raid.

Joining Unit 101 in Operation 'SHOSHANA' was a paratroop force led by Capt. Davidi. Sharon commanded the operation, with Lt. Har-Zion commanding the covering forces lying in ambush. After successfully crossing into Jordanian territory, the attack force was spotted and a pitched battle ensued. Firing wildly, 'Kibya Task Force' commander Shlomo Baum (who carried 18 hand grenades, two 'Molotov cocktails', and ten Thompson magazines in his belt) led Davidi's force through Kibya's defences using 'Bangalore torpedoes', under intense Arab Legion fire. Sharon ordered Kibya's homes to be demolished. Paratroop sappers ordered the residents to flee, and dozens of homes were dynamited. It was later clear that not all the civilians were evacuated, as no less than 69 bodies were found in the rubble.

Two paratroopers from the NA'HA'L 88th Bn. seen during Operation 'SHOMRON', the raid on Kilkilya, 10 October 1956. Tan-khaki fatigues are worn, as are British and French helmets. The paratrooper on the left carries an UZI SMG with a wooden stock, while his comrade carries the Czech K98 with rifle grenade firing attachment. (IDF Archives)

890th Paratroop Battalion

The Israeli government falsely denied 'official involvement' in the raid, claiming that it was the work of outraged civilians seeking revenge. Unit 101 continued its operations, but was disbanded in January 1954, and incorporated with the paratroopers, forming the 890th Paratroop Battalion. Sharon was appointed battalion commander over Yehuda Harari (causing Harari's resignation, and mass defections by loyal TZANHANIM) and hoped to attract many Unit 101 veterans to the unit. Although it had existed for only five months, the importance of Unit 101 was best summarised by Chief of Staff Moshe Dayan's speech to the fighters on the unit's final operational day: 'Maybe you *are* the chosen—but it is your responsibility to join the paratroopers and show *them* what the IDF is!'

The merger of Unit 101 and the paratroopers meant the formation of a battalion organised for large-scale operations, not just reconnaissance patrols and reprisals. The 890th Bn. sought out new and innovative commanders, mainly from the ranks of the NA'HA'L (Hebrew acronym for 'Pioneer Fighting Youth'), whose 88th Bn. was now incorporated into the paratroop force. Sharon and Davidi (who now commanded the 890th Bn.'s reconnaissance company) trained the paratroopers in the art of commando raids, as well as conventional combat.

In 1955–56 the paratroopers carried out nine major retaliatory raids. In each operation new weapons and tactics were utilised, as in Operation 'ELKAYAM', the raid on the Egyptian police station in Khan Yunis on 30 August 1955. Here the battalion deployed for the first time as a mechanised force, utilising heavily armed M3 half-tracks; and in heavy fighting, 72 Egyptians were killed. In Operation 'A'ALI ZAIT', the paratroopers used small rubber craft, crossing the Sea of Galilee to attack Syrian fortifications. A reconnaissance company led by Meir Har-Zion separated from the main force, and proceeded to kidnap two Syrian officers who were traded later for four Israeli POWs. Lt. Har-Zion was awarded the OT HAOZ bravery decoration for his courage under fire; he was critically wounded, and released from active duty nine months later.

The largest such operation, however, was Operation 'SHOMRON', the paratroop raid on the Kilkilya Police Station in Jordan on 10 October 1956. By 1956 the original 890th Bn. had evolved into a brigade-size force known as Unit 202. This comprised the 890th Bn. (now commanded by Maj. Rafael 'Raful' Eitan, an ex-PAL'MACHNIK and OT HAOZ recipient), the NA'HA'L 88th Bn., and a new reserve battalion, the 771st. Operation 'SHOMRON' saw the brigade operating together for the first time, as well as being the first retaliatory paratroop raid receiving armoured and air support. A fierce battle developed in and around the Jordanian police fort; the paratroopers were newly issued with UZI SMGs. The 890th Bn. was responsible for destroying the fort, while the 88th Bn. was to provide covering force and lay ambushes for Jordanian reinforcements. The mission was carried out as planned, though with too many casualties: 18 paratroopers were killed—including Yirmi Bardanov, the battalion demolitions officer, who had been released from active service days earlier but re-joined the attack force on his own accord.

Maj. Shlomoh Baum (*left*) orders his paratroops out of the Kilkilya Police Station just prior to its demolition. Baum wears standard issue olive fatigues, and a rare short type of khaki canvas UZI ammunition pouches. Note British bayonet tucked into pistol belt. (IDF Archives)

The Sinai Campaign, 1956

Just 19 days after Operation 'SHOMRON', the men of the 890th Bn. found themselves airborne over the Sinai in 16 Dakotas. At 16:59 hours on 29 October 1956 the paratroopers 'hooked up' and waited for the green light to blink. 'Raful' Eitan jumped first, followed by 350 others, landing at 'Parker Memorial', 4km west of the Mitla Pass. They were 150km from the Israeli border, 70km from the Suez Canal, and awaiting the arrival of the remainder of Unit 202. Operation 'KADESH', Israel's invasion of the Sinai Peninsula, was under way.

The paratroops were originally intended to jump over El-Arish, but the strategic Mitla Pass was eventually chosen, since intelligence and aerial photographs indicated only minor Egyptian troop activity in the area. Their mission was to pre-position an ambush force, prepared to defeat Egyptian armour and infantry reinforcements moving east into the desert to confront the IDF advance. Throughout the night of 29/30 October heavy weapons and supplies were para-dropped to the 890th Bn. The paratroopers dug in; but Eitan, becoming edgy as he waited for the Egyptians to attack, sent a patrol to the eastern opening of the Mitla Pass. The patrol reported heavy concentrations of Egyptian forces in ambush position; and Eitan decided to wait for Sharon, who arrived with Unit 202's other battalions at 22:30 hours.

Jealous of Eitan's battalion for jumping at Mitla, Mordechai Gur pleaded with Sharon to allow his 88th Bn. to break through the Mitla Pass. Sharon agreed, and requested permission from IDF Southern Command to authorise a 'small reconnaissance force' to enter the pass. The paratroop operation at Mitla was already causing edginess in Southern Command HQ: many felt that the paratroopers were in above their heads. Nevertheless, Sharon received authorisation for the 'reconnaissance', and proceeded to send in the entire 88th Bn., arguing that 'paratroopers go on patrols as if heading out to a major battle'; and indeed they were.

Eitan's men were bitter that the 88th Bn. were afforded the opportunity to lead the advance through Mitla: they had been the first to jump, and now the 'glory' would go to another unit. Leading

the 88th Bn. column was the reconnaissance M3 half-track commanded by Lt. Arik Caspi. As Caspi reached the pass entrance he observed armed soldiers, but could not positively identify them. The battalion approached closer, and soon found itself the target of an Egyptian ambush and in a murderous cross-fire. The battle for Mitla developed into a rescue operation, with unit after unit pinned down as they were drawn into the Egyptian trap. During what developed into a desperate battle, Sharon remained at 'Parker Memorial'. Many criticised him for cowardice in not directing the rescue operation personally, though Gur was also blamed for dragging an entire battalion to possible destruction.

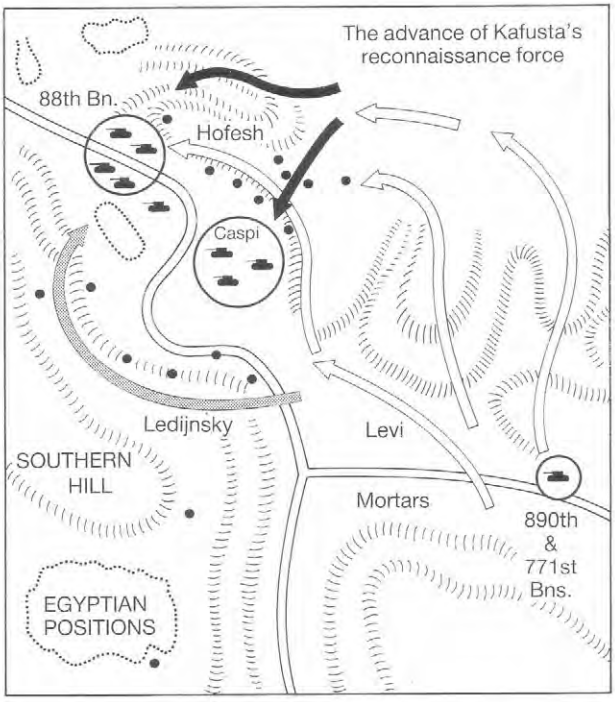
As the battle raged, Gur's radio communications became less coherent. Micha Kapusta's reconnaissance unit suffered heavy casualties while trying in vain to reach Gur, as Egyptian Meteors staged a strafing run. As darkness fell the fatigued paratroopers inched their way towards the mouths of the caves sheltering the Egyptians, and proceeded to lob in grenade after grenade, followed by magazine-loads of UZI SMG fire. One by one the Egyptian positions fell; and by midnight on 31 October the Mitla Pass was in Israeli hands. The Egyptians lost 260 killed; Unit 202 suffered 38 dead, and 120 wounded.

A paratroop medic from the 890th Bn. stands by the C-47 which will ferry him to Mitla, 29 October 1956. He wears olive fatigues, an Israeli copy of a French parachute, US Army medic's pouch, US M-1 helmet, and carries the UZI SMG. (IGPO)

A patrol from SAYERET SHAKED pursue Egyptian Military Intelligence agents just prior to the outbreak of the 1956 War. They wear khaki fatigues, and are lightly equipped for mobility in the desert. Note cap and US map case of officer peering through field glasses. (IDF Archives)

Although the débâcle at Mitla resulted from poor communications and over-zealousness, all ranks distinguished themselves in combat. Most notable of these were Oved Ledijnsky (who was killed in the battle) and Levi Hofesh, company commanders who were instrumental in leading assaults against the Egyptian firing positions in Mitla's countless 'sepulchres'. In a token military gesture on 3 November, the 88th Bn. was parachuted into the A'tur airfield, to secure the Israeli advance to Sharm es-Sheikh and the Straits of Tiran. The paratroopers returned to Israel as heroes, victors of a fierce, though somewhat pointless battle.

In 1957 the paratroopers settled into a routine of training and expansion. The heroic tales of Mitla attracted the cream of Israel's youth; and Unit 202



The battle for the Mitla Pass, 31 October 1956.

'Raful' Eitan's men dig in near the 'Parker Memorial', preparing firing positions for the expected Egyptian response which never materialised. Note BESA light machine gun, just visible in the rear. (IDF Archives)

became HATIVAT HATZANHANIM (the Paratroop Brigade). SAYERET TZANHANIM, 'paratroop recon', was expanded into a battalion—training on enemy territory, and taking part in most of the intelligence-gathering operations of the period[1]. More than shock troops, SAYERET TZANHANIM proved to be strategic innovators, developing assault tactics with heavily armed jeeps, blazing desert trails and becoming the first IDF unit to deploy from helicopters in 1960. In 1963 HA'AN TZANHANIM (Paratroop Engineering Unit) was established, as were two reserve paratroop brigades, the 55th and 80th. The TZANHANIM acquired Nordatlas transports from France, and trained paratroop officers the world over.

In 1964, a new battalion, the 202nd, joined the brigade. Col. Eitan was appointed brigade commander, and large-scale exercises were held. From 1965 to 1967 the paratroops once again found themselves operating as a retaliatory force against guerrilla targets in Jordan and Lebanon. Four major raids were carried out, most notably

[1]On 6 September 1959, the unit's commander, Capt. Yair Peled, was brutally murdered by Bedouins during one such operation.

Operation 'MAGRESA'—the brigade-size daylight raid on the Jordanian village and guerrilla stronghold of Samua, resulting in the deaths of 19 Jordanian officers.

The 1967 Six Day War

Early on the morning of 5 June 1967, Israeli Air Force planes attacked airfields and ground targets in Egypt. Ground forces, which had been on full alert for three weeks, prepared for their pre-designated assignments. In the southern sector the mission assigned to HATIVAT HATZANHANIM was to 'purify' the enemy positions at Rafah. 'Raful's' force consisted of two paratroop battalions, an M-48 tank unit and SAYERET TZANHANIM commanded by Maj. Dan Shomron (at the time of writing the IDF Chief of Staff). At 08:55 hours dozens of M3 half-tracks ferried the paratroops across the Egyptian frontier towards Rafah; while at 18:50 hours, the 80th Reserve Para Bde. commanded by Col. Dani Matt neutralised the Egyptian artillery positions at Um Katef in a heliborne assault.

The fortifications at Rafah were stubbornly defended, but after a day's combat resistance the Egyptians fled their positions. 'Raful' urged his men on, intending the paratroops to be the first Israeli soldiers to reach the Suez Canal. Just 25km from the Canal, 'Raful' took a bullet in the head; and Col. Aharon Davidi, the IDF's first KA'TZ'HA'R (Chief Paratroop and Infantry Officer), assumed command of HATIVAT HATZANHANIM. Days later in hospital, 'Raful' received word that the paratroops had beaten the 7th Armd.Bde. to the Canal.

Paratroopers from the 88th Bn. question a Bedouin near A'tur, 3 November 1956. Note interesting olive drab para-smocks, clearly modelled on British and French types; olive fatigue trousers with large cargo pockets; brown paratroop boots; UZIs, and tan-khaki canvas grenade pouches worn by paratroopers on right. (IDF Archives)

The paratroops' epic action of the war was the 55th Reserve Para Bde.'s assault on Jerusalem. Commanded by Col. Mordechai Gur, the brigade was originally to parachute into El-Arish on 5 June; but when Jordan commenced hostilities in Jerusalem, the opportunity to 'liberate' the City of David was at hand. The Jordanians, however, were determined to defend the holy city at all costs.

Ammunition Hill and the Police School were crucial positions overlooking axes of advance into Jerusalem from the north and east. Ammunition Hill (or 'the monster') was heavily fortified, with 41 bunkers and a series of interlocking trenches. The Police School was also well defended, with heavy machine guns and snipers; its capture was assigned to the 66th Bn.'s ALEPH Co. The Jordanians threw everything they had at ALEPH Co., including tank, 25 pdr. and machine gun fire. Undaunted, the paratroops continued their advance, breaking through the outer perimeter barbed wire with 'Bangalore torpedoes'. Once inside, the force split into squads of four, and cleared the rooms of Jordanian defenders by tossing in grenades, followed by bursts of 9mm fire from their UZIs. At dawn ALEPH Co. joined the battalion's assault on Ammunition Hill.

By 03:40 hours, the exhausting fight for the hill was under way. The Jordanians defended their positions tenaciously, turning the capture of each bunker and trench into a major battle. The confined trenches slowed the paratroops' advance to a crawl, and many discarded their bulky packs and 'long' FNs and MAGs. In many cases, captured M-1 carbines were used as clubs in the dozens of private hand-to-hand battles on the hill. When 'KOACH NIR', a company-size force, found itself dangerously pinned down near the large 'observation bunker', Pte. Eitan Nava was despatched on a 'suicide charge' to divert Jordanian fire away

from the company. Moments later, he was dead,[1] but his lone gesture had restored momentum to the battered reservists. At 05:15 hours, the Israeli flag was hoisted atop Ammunition Hill.

At dusk on 6 June the 71st Bn., supported by a tank company and the brigade's reconnaissance force (commanded by Micha Kapusta of Mitla fame), attacked the fortifications near the Rockefeller Museum, and secured the north-east route of advance into the Old City. The Jordanians had placed a strong sniper force along the Old City walls, and the reconnaissance forces met with heavy fire. At 08:30 hours on 7 June, Gur received authorisation to enter the Old City: the 66th Bn. attacked from Mt. Scopus, the 28th Bn. through Herod's Gate, and Kapusta's reconnaissance unit through the Lion's Gate—the only gate wide enough to allow the movement of armoured vehicles. At 10:00 hours, Gur addressed his officers, announcing: '*To all paratroop commanders: we are entering the Old City. We will ascend to the Western Wall and the Temple Mount. The Jewish Nation awaits our victory. Israel awaits this moment in history. Ascend and achieve victory!*' Through the narrow alleyways of the *suq* (market) in the Arab quarter, the men gingerly proceeded towards the Wailing Wall, the holiest site in Judaism. An hour later, Gur's voice once again interrupted the communication network, proclaiming '*The Temple Mount is in our hands—I repeat—the Temple Mount is in our hands*!' Jerusalem was unified at last.

Although a major heliborne operation by Col. Matt's 80th Bde. was conducted to secure the southern Golan Heights on 9 June, the 'liberation' of Jerusalem was a victory of greater political and religious significance. A special bond developed between the city and the paratroopers, and all paratroop and élite forces swearing-in ceremonies have since taken place at the Wailing Wall.

The War of Attrition and after, 1967–73: The Jordan Valley

Large scale Palestinian guerrilla infiltration across the Jordan River began immediately following the Six Day War. The mountainous desert region of the Jordan Valley was ideal for guerrilla activity, offering sanctuary in thousands of uncharted caves and ravines; and 'Raful', fully recovered from his head wound, was charged with establishing law and order in the area. Realizing that a non-conventional approach was needed, he formed HATIVAT HA'BIKA'A ('Valley Brigade') from paratroop and élite infantry formations, hand picking his commanders, including veteran paratroopers such as deputy brigade commander Lt. Col. Arik Regev, and the brigade's brilliant young operations officer, Lt. Gad Manela.

The campaign in the Jordan Valley became known as the MIRDAFIM or 'pursuits'. Once informed that the border had been crossed, a force of anything from platoon to battalion size would initiate a pursuit on foot and by helicopter, ceasing only when the guerrillas were killed or captured. Cross-border ambushes were also carried out by small bands of paratroops, heli-lifted to points of

Paratroops undergo 'balancing manoeuvres', 1959. Note explosives in tan-khaki pack secured by rope to an infantry packboard. He wears the three-pocket olive fatigue trousers and brown leather paratroop boots. (IDF Archives)

[1]For his courage, Pte. Nava was posthumously awarded Israel's highest medal for bravery, the OT HAGVURA—'Order of Courage'.

A SEREN (captain) of SAYERET GOLANI, (centre) directs platoon-level manoeuvres near the Syrian border, March 1964. He wears French airborne issue 'lizard-pattern' camouflage fatigues; his two deputies wear olive fatigues with olive indigenous so-called 'Battledress' spring jackets, later dubbed 'Bar-Lev' jackets, with dark green fur collars. Note captured Czech Vz-25 9mm SMG carried; this was supplied to Syria in great numbers. (IDF Archives)

access across the Jordan River. The success of the 'pursuit' depended on many crucial elements, including speed, communications, and firepower: most important, however, was leadership. 'Raful' realized that the lengthy operations in hostile and unfamiliar territory would unnerve the young conscripts, and ordered senior officers to lead each MIRDAF. This instilled confidence in the ranks, though resulting in the combat fatalities of many of HATIVAT HA'BIKA'A's commanding officers, including Regev and Manela, killed on 26 July 1968 during a routine pursuit which cornered eight guerrillas at a cave. Lt.Col. Regev (then HATIVAT HA'BIKA'A's commander) led the assault, and was killed immediately by a burst of AK-47 fire. Manela instinctively went in after the killers of his beloved commander, and he, too, was felled with a burst of automatic fire from inside the cave. (An agricultural co-operative, MOSHAV ARGAMAN, from the combined names of both Arik Regev and Gad Manela, was founded near the spot where the two had been killed.)

Newly commissioned paratroop and GOLANI officers (note soldier in background with peaked officer's cap and infantry beret badge) stand at attention at BA'HAD 1, the IDF's Officers' Academy. The paratroop SEGEN (first lieutenant), wears the olive YARKIT four-pocket paratroop Class A blouse, Class A olive trousers, brown boots, and red beret. Silver metal parachutist wings (KNAFEI TZNICHA) are worn above the left breast pocket with blue background; the SIKAT ME'MEM, or officer's qualification pin, is worn on the left collar. Note khaki canvas pistol belt, supporting a holster (hidden from view). (IDF Archives)

The MIRDAFIM were the by-products of the well-entrenched Palestinian guerrilla infrastructure in Jordan. On 21 March 1968 the IDF raided the town of Karameh (a major guerrilla staging area) in Operation 'TOFET'. HATIVAT HATZANHANIM, commanded by Col. Dani Matt, and an armoured element from the élite 7th Armd.Bde. crossed the Jordan River on hastily constructed Bailey bridges, while SAYERET TZANHANIM, commanded by Maj. Matan Vilnai, was heli-lifted to Karameh's eastern road junction. The main force commanded by Matt engaged both Palestinian guerrillas and Jordanian Army regulars in fierce fighting. Tank and air battles ensued; and following the day-long battle, the IDF withdrew, suffering 28 dead. The Palestinians chose to regard Karameh as a victory, although 61 Jordanians and 150 Palestinian fighters were killed, with a further 128 taken prisoner.

The 1970 Jordanian civil war[1] virtually stopped

[1]See MAA 194, *Arab Armies of the Middle East Wars* (2).

HATIVAT HATZANHANIM's NCO jump instructor makes a last-minute check to a nervous-looking conscript's EFA-672-12(IS) main parachute. The NCO (instructor status indicated by the white plastic background to the master parachutist wings), wears the YARKIT, with HATIVAT HATZANHANIM unit tag attached to the left shoulder strap. The paratroops lined up for inspection wear olive fatigues, T-10-R (IS) reserve chutes, ammunition carrying packs, khaki canvas web gear, Israeli produced M-1 helmets with tan netting, and UZIs with folding stocks. (IDF Archives)

infiltration into Israel, except by those escaping the wrath of King Hussein's Bedouin soldiers. A state of semi-tranquillity settled over the border, which continues today, a testament to the paratroops who fought there, and to the paratroops who now patrol the same desert wilderness.

The Egyptian Front

Three weeks after the Six Day War, Egyptian artillery and commando attacks began against Israeli positions along the Suez Canal. The IDF responded with aerial and artillery bombardments of their own; and paratroops were despatched to stabilise the area. Lengthy patrols were initiated against marauding Egyptian commandos, and the paratroops secured the IDF lines of communication from enemy interference. Between November 1968 and January 1970, paratroop and recon forces conducted 12 large-scale raids against targets deep inside Egyptian territory; these ranged from lobbing mortar shells at an Egyptian naval base on the Red Sea (Operation 'Buffalo'—23/12/69), to seizing Shedwan Island for over 24 hours (Operation 'RODOS'—22/1/70). The two most famous raids, however, were Operations 'HELEM' and 'TARNEGOL 53'.

Operation 'HELEM' (1 November 1968) was the paratroops' first overt long-range raid into Egypt. The objective was the destruction of the electrical power station at Nadja'a-Hamadi in the Nile Valley, over 300km from Israel, by a heliborne commando force. The brainchild of KA'TZ'HA'R Brig.Gen. 'Raful' Eitan, the operation was carried out by SAYERET TZANHANIM's 14 best fighters, commanded by Capt. Matan Vilnai. The attack

A SAYERET GOLANI officer directs a training exercise, January 1966. All wear 'lizard-pattern' fatigues, indigenously incorporated with a 'Battledress' jacket. Note black ELBA boots, khaki canvas web gear, and folding-stock UZI variant fitted with two clipped magazines. (IDF Archives)

force landed 5km from the target, neutralised the Egyptian defenders and destroyed the power station. The raid highlighted Egyptian vulnerability, and for two months after the raid peace came to the front.

In mid-December 1969, IAF aerial photographs revealed the establishment of an extensive Egyptian air-radar network. The General Staff ordered their 'termination', but 'Raful' had grander ambitions and presented plans for the kidnapping of a complete, operable, 15 ton Soviet P-12 radar. On 27 December, a sizeable NA'HA'L paratroop force landed at Ras Arab, and proceeded to silence all opposition and to prepare the radar for a return flight to Israel. Time was of the essence as a major Egyptian garrison was only a few miles away; and it took the paratroopers only four hours to prepare the P-12 for transport. Following this raid the paratroops' 'mission impossible' reputation passed securely into legend.

Syria and Lebanon

In the summer of 1968, Israel faced a new security threat: international terrorism. At first the attacks were directed against EL AL (Israel national airline) and other airlines serving Israel. Since the attacks originated from Beirut, a spectacular act of retaliation was planned to 'teach the Lebanese a lesson'. On 28 December, under 'Raful's' direct command, three Super-Frelons and two Bell-205s ferried a paratroop force to Beirut International Airport. While one group proceeded to block all movement in and out of the airport, sappers achieved the demolition of every Lebanese MEA airliner on the tarmac—14 in all. Not one shot was fired during the entire operation, though the burning airliner skeleton remained as a mark of the paratroops' destructive potential.

Although the paratroops conducted numerous raids against Syrian and Lebanese targets (including a spectacular attack on a Syrian military base at Sue'da in Operation 'SHEFET'—17/6/70), most commando-style operations had terrorists as their targets. The largest of these was Operation 'BARDAS 54-55', the amphibious and heliborne paratroop assault on the *el-Fatah* naval commando base north of Tripoli on the night of 20–21 February 1972. The operation depended on close-knit air and naval co-operation, and KA'TZ'HA'R Brig.Gen. Emmanuel 'Mano' Shaked (an ex-PAL'MACHNIK, and decorated recon paratrooper), commanded the entire operation from the deck of an IDF/Navy missile boat. The assault force, commanded by Col. Uzi Yairi, landed by Zodiac craft 6km from the target following a rather nauseating journey for the 'land-loving' paratroopers. After a brisk forced march, the sentries were 'taken out' with silenced UZI SMGs and the base was attacked. In an intelligence coup, entire filing cabinets were removed from the buildings before the facilities were destroyed. Over 30 terrorists were killed in the raid; the paratroops and Naval Commandos suffered eight wounded.

(Other such operations conducted by Naval Commando and SAYERET units will be discussed in later sections.)

The 1973 War

The War of Attrition established the paratroops as the IDF's principal 'commando' force; yet when Egypt and Syria simultaneously attacked Israel on

6 October 1973, launching the 1973 Yom Kippur War, the paratroops found themselves operating as conventional mechanised infantrymen. HATIVAT HATZANHANIM (by now designated as the 35th Para Bde., under the command of Col. Uzi Yairi) saw action on the southern front, together with the 247th Reserve Para Bde. (formerly the 55th) commanded by Col. Dani Matt; while the 317th (formerly 80th) Reserve Para Bde. was mobilised for service in the Golan Heights with the NA'HA'L 50th Para Battalion. Although the 1973 War is best remembered as a 'tank war', it was the paratroops, as always, who led the vanguard.

In Sinai, the 35th Bde. entered the fighting on 8 October, battling heliborne Egyptian commandos near Ras Sudr in 'pursuits' similar to those of the Jordan Valley, and lifting the Egyptian siege of the northernmost Bar-Lev Line fortification at 'BUDAPEST'. The 247th Bde. attached its battalions to the armoured brigades containing the Egyptian onslaught; and following the historic armoured battle of 14 October (the second largest tank battle in military history), it prepared for the most important operation of the campaign: Operation 'Stout-Hearted'—the crossing of the Suez Canal into Egyptian Africa.

The lead force which crossed the Canal in rubber dinghies on the night of 15/16 October consisted of only 36 men from the brigade's SAYERET, and the 35th Bde.'s élite 'Amphibious Sapper Unit'. It was two days before the Egyptians discovered their bridgehead, which facilitated the crossing of the entire 247th Bde. as well as two complete armoured divisions. A fierce battle developed; though it did not approach in scope and ferocity that which broke out at the Chinese Farm on the east bank of the Canal.

To secure the crossing from both sides, a battalion from the 247th Bde. was sent to clear the Egyptian-occupied Chinese Farm, a vital choke position controlling the AKAVISH, LEXINCON, and TIRTUR roads. The routine operation developed into a battle of survival, as patrol after patrol of paratroopers came under murderous Egyptian missile and small arms fire. On 16 October the 35th Bde.[1] were sent in to rescue the badly mauled reservists, but they too found themselves fighting for their lives. In the three-day battle the paratroops suffered over 50 dead and hundreds of wounded.

Meanwhile, on the west bank of the Canal, the IDF met with determined though crumbling resistance. This led to a false sense of security in the IDF camp; and on 24 October, the last days of fighting before a UN-imposed cease-fire, a paratroop battalion was sent into Suez City to gain territory. In Suez, the paratroops found themselves in the midst of a determined Egyptian commando force; and were forced to withdraw at nightfall after suffering dozens of dead and wounded.

On the northern front, elements of the NA'HA'L's 50th Para Bn. heroically defended the line against advancing Syrian armour and infantry forces, not relinquishing a single position. There were numerous paratroop raids against Syrian targets, including the destruction of a bridge in eastern Syria by a heli-borne HA'AN TZANHANIM force, though most of these operations remain highly classified. The final mission of the 317th Bde. was assisting the GOLANI Infantry Bde. in the recapture of Mt. Hermon. Four CH-53 helicopters ferried the paratroop force to the Syrian peak of Mt. Hermon; and although the heavily armed Syrian com-

A reconnaissance paratrooper from SAYERET TZANHANIM tosses in an anti-personnel grenade during assault exercises. He wears general service issue French 'lizard' fatigues, and carries the Israeli-produced FN 7.62mm squad support weapon, the bipod wrapped with hessian for grip and camouflage. The white tape across the helmet is for station-keeping at night. (IDF Archives)

[1]Brigade commander Yairi survived the Chinese Farm, only to be killed two years later leading the rescue operation at Tel Aviv's Savoy Hotel, seized by 'Black September' terrorists on 5 March 1975.

HATIVAT HATZANHANIM commander 'Raful' Eitan observes the battle at Rafah, 5 June 1967. He wears an olive field cap with khaki-bound brim, olive smock and three-pocket fatigue trousers. The three green-stencilled FALAFELS on the rank slide indicate ALUF MISHNE, colonel. (IGPO)

mandos put up a stiff resistance with heavy RPG and sniper fire, the position fell by the day's end.

The 'armoured bias' of the 1973 war introduced profound changes into the paratroops' combat doctrine. Hand-held 66mm LAW rockets and jeep and M113 mounted TOWs were incorporated in massive numbers, as the paratroops took on the IDF's anti-tank responsibility with the formation of SAYERET OREV (the paratroop reconnaissance anti-tank battalion). Terrorism, however, and not Arab tanks, remained Israel's most pressing security threat, requiring the TZANHANIM's unique talents.

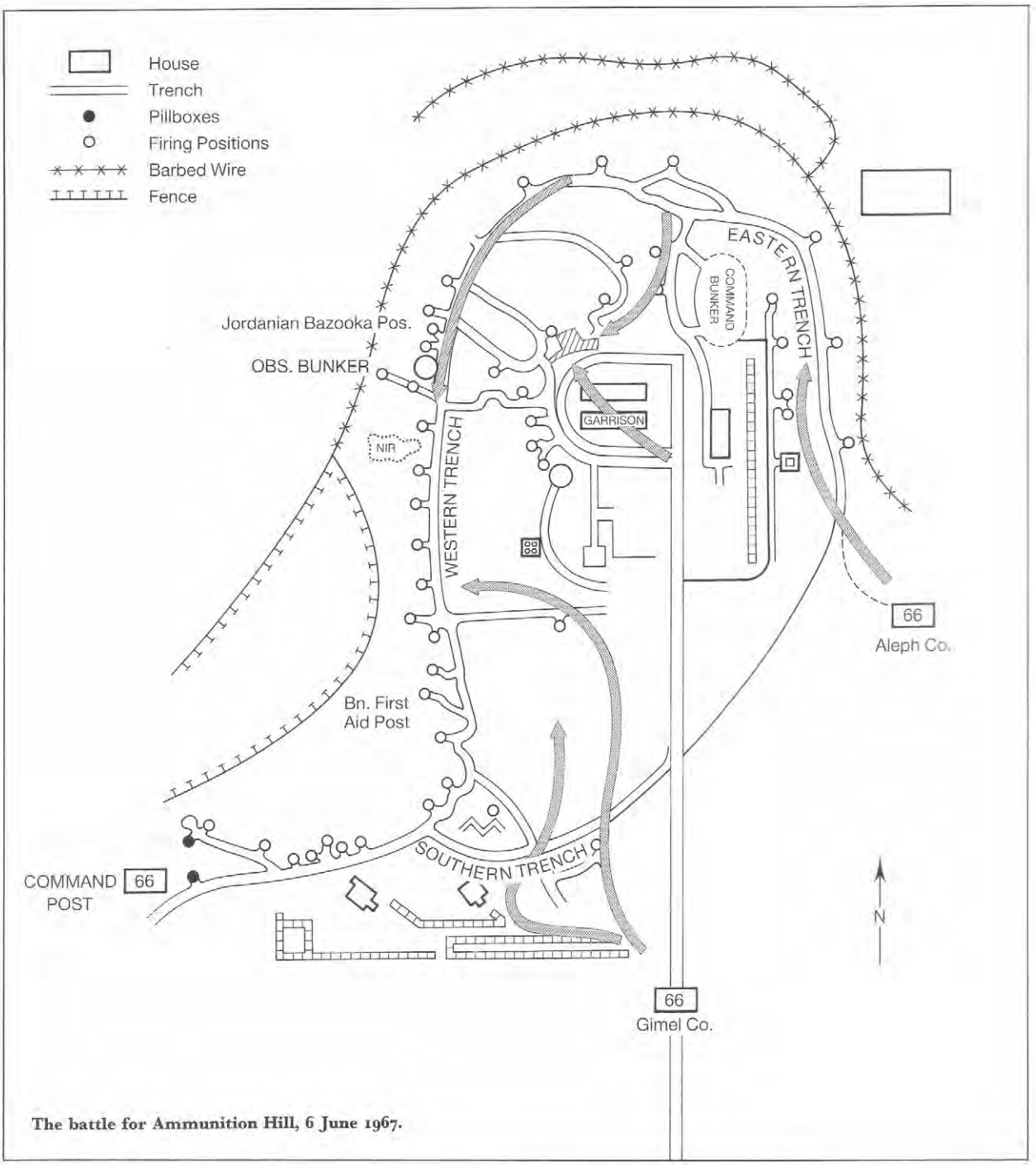
Entebbe

The hijacking of Air France Flight 139 to Entebbe, Uganda, on 27 June 1976 by four PFLP terrorists at first seemed routine; but when all the hostages except for the Israelis and Jews were released, KA'TZ'HA'R Brig.Gen. Dan Shomron was summoned to provide a military solution. Three plans were considered, including a brigade para-drop into Entebbe itself; but in the end a quick air rescue was chosen. The mission was codenamed Operation 'Thunderball', and was commanded by Lt.Col. Yonatan 'Yoni' Netanyahu. A full-scale model of the terminal housing the hostages was constructed, and the paratroop and recon unit selected for the mission trained around the clock, perfecting assault techniques in the shortest time humanly possible. On 2 July a 'dry run' was conducted, including C-130 Hercules transports, before the pleased eyes of Chief of Staff Lt.Gen. Mordechai Gur.

At 16:00 hours on 3 July, four C-130s took off from Ophira Air Force Base loaded with the rescue force; the 450-minute flight reached Entebbe only 30 seconds behind schedule. As the lead C-130 taxied to a halt, paratroopers jumped out at pre-positioned points to place emergency beacons by runway lights. The lead column of vehicles (including a black Mercedes and Land Rovers to impersonate President Idi Amin's entourage) proceeded to eliminate two Ugandan sentries, and 15 seconds later the paratroops had begun their systematic elimination of the terrorists and the rescue of the 103 hostages—a task performed with split-second timing and deadly accuracy. Three other C-130s landed, unloading reinforcements including a mechanised force from SAYERET GOLANI, and Shomron's command jeep. The entire operation from touchdown to last lift-off took exactly 91 minutes, and resulted in the deaths of 13 terrorists and 35 Ugandans, and the destruction of 11 Ugandan Air Force MiGs. Most importantly the mission brought back to Israel 100 ex-hostages (three were killed in the assault), as well as the body of the operation's commander, Lt.Col. Netanyahu, the sole military casualty.

Operation 'Peace For Galilee'

On 6 June 1982 the IDF, commanded by Chief of Staff Lt.Gen. 'Raful' Eitan, invaded Lebanon with 60,000 troops in an effort to rid her northern border of the incessant terrorist harassment. In the campaign's coastal sector a large portion of the 35th Para Bde. (commanded by KA'TZ'HA'R Brig.Gen. Amos Yaron, operations officer of the 55th Bde. in



The battle for Ammunition Hill, 6 June 1967.

1967), including SAYERET TZANHANIM and the NA'HA'L's 50th Para Bn., landed near the Awali River on 7 June. It was the IDF's largest ever amphibious assault, and the paratroops were entrusted with the capture of the PLO stronghold of Sidon and the Ein el-Hilweh refugee camp. The paratroops were eager to fight on dry land following the turbulent sea journey; but the determined Palestinian defence would soon have disheartened the bravest of men. The costly advance through Sidon's heavily defended streets and *casbah* seasoned the paratroops for Ein el-Hilweh. Unable to utilise their heavy firepower out of concern for the civilian populace, the paratroops were forced to rely on their combat skills and unit cohesion. The camp's urban squalor provided perfect cover for the

The deputy commander of the 66th Bn. calls in artillery support during the closing stages of the fight for Ammunition Hill. Note AN/PRC-25 field radio carried on an infantry packboard; British paratroop helmets fitted with tan netting, and IDF-issue canteens. The radioman has found a practical means for carrying the radio handset, attached to his helmet chin straps. (IDF Archives)

defending Palestinians, and each alleyway, house, and room had to be fought for: the TZANHANIM suffered horrific casualties. Brig.Gen. Yaron was forced further to deplete his reserves, and heli-lift an additional battalion to Ein el-Hilweh, which was not neutralised until seven days later.

Following Ein el-Hilweh, the paratroops led the IDF advance to Beirut, where they took part in bitter fighting against Syrian commandos and PLO regulars. In the eastern sector, a special brigade-size force (KOACH PELED) had been built around SAYERET OREV to deal with Syrian armour. Equipped with M113s and jeeps mounted with TOW missiles, and foot soldiers carrying Dragons, LAWs, and RPGs, SAYERET OREV disrupted Syrian lines of communication by ambushing Syrian vehicles along the Beka'a Valley's narrow, twisting roads. In the bloody battle of Jebel Barouk they proved their unique skills, destroying dozens of T-62s, and being the only Israeli unit to destroy a Syrian T-72: in fact, they achieved a greater tank-kill rate than did the Israeli tank forces.

When the invasion of Lebanon developed into an occupation of indeterminate length, the paratroops once again found themselves pursuing guerrillas and conducting retaliatory raids, against both fanatical Shi'ites and returning Palestinian guerrillas. This period, known as 'Iron Fist', saw the formation of a new breed of paratroop soldier and officer, brutalised by the endless operations in a hostile environment against a shrewd and deadly enemy. Transformed into more than mere seasoned veterans, they were forced to become bitter fighters, relying on the élite nature of their training and heritage for survival.

The 35th Paratroop Brigade and its reserve counterparts remain the striking edge of the Israel Defense Forces, set apart by their hard-earned legend, the parachutist wings insignia, and the motto '*After the Paratroops*'.

The GOLANI Infantry Brigade

The 1st GOLANI Infantry Brigade was one of the seven original HAGANAH territorial brigades, responsible for the Galilee region. It enjoyed a fine combat reputation in the War of Independence, participating in the battles for Safed and Eilat. Following the 1948 War the IDF developed into Israel's 'melting pot', absorbing hundreds of thousands of new immigrants from over 60 nations. GOLANI received a disproportionate number of immigrants, many of whom were illiterate, undisciplined and unwilling to soldier. The brigade duly earned a reputation as the IDF's 'trash bag', its operational performance doing little to discourage this negative image.

In the early 1950s the sensation surrounding Unit 101 and the paratroops further lowered GOLANI's self-esteem, leading the General Staff to reconsider the rôle of the brigade within the IDF. The brigade's equipment and manpower were upgraded to 'élite status'; and junior paratroop officers were transferred into GOLANI's ranks, improving discipline, morale, and combat spirit. Intensive training routines were initiated, including the infamous GOLANI annual cross-country march from Galilee to the Gulf of Eilat. On 25 October 1955 GOLANI units joined the 890th Para Bn. in raiding an Egyptian outpost near Nitzana. Twelve months later, GOLANI played a major rôle in Operation 'KADESH', capturing the strategic Rafah crossroads.

GOLANI's true emergence as an élite fighting formation can be traced back to 1959 with the formation of SAYERET GOLANI, the brigade's reconnaissance force. Unlike other SAYEROT, SAYERET GOLANI (or the 'Flying Leopards', a reference to its recon wing insignia) did not accept conscript volunteers. Instead, its volunteers were the best GOLANI had to offer—soldiers and NCOs who had proved their combat worth. They were the only applicants allowed to qualify for the trial week or GIBUSH which tests the candidate's mental, physical and psychological limits. Those passing this ordeal undergo further examinations, and a further six months' training, the successful completion of which permits 'formal' volunteering into the SAYERET. This strict recruitment procedure made SAYERET GOLANI into one of the IDF's premier reconnaissance units.[1]

SAYERET GOLANI's training routine was brutal, and included 100km forced marches with 50kg

[1]See Sayeret Golani, *Military Illustrated Past & Present* No. 5, 1987.

Paratroopers from the 71st Bn. take a well-deserved break following the battle for the Rockefeller Museum. Note AN/PRC-10s carried in tan rucksacks on infantry packboards. (IDF Archives)

packs, as well as intensive firing exercises. SAYERET GOLANI did not accept supermen, nor did it produce them: it installed instead a deep emotional bond between soldier, commander and unit, typical of all IDF élite units, and one of the main factors behind their combat proficiency. The SAYERET set an example which the entire brigade followed closely; and within a year of its inception, the GOLANI Bde.'s five other battalions—1st 'Lightning' Bn. (G'DUD BARAK), 72nd 'First Conquerors' Bn. (HABOK'IM HARISHONIM), 17th 'Gideon' Bn. (G'DUD GIDEON), 13th Bn., and the NCOs' Course Bn. 'Golan Lions' (ARAYOT HAGOLAN)—had their first opportunity to prove their new-found combat proficiency in Operation 'HARGOL', a raid on the Syrian mortar positions at Tewfiq on 31 January 1960.

The raid on Tewfiq, brought the brigade some long overdue publicity; and in 1961 Col. Mordechai Gur left the paratroops to assume command of GOLANI. He brought with him many of the paratroops' élite traditions, and worked feverishly to develop a close bond between the command echelon and the ranks. Gur up-graded the combat status of the GOLANI even further by offering parachute training to the brigade's outstanding soldiers.

On 16 March 1962, the Syrians fired on an Israeli Police launch in the Sea of Galilee. This was the final straw in a long series of Syrian artillery attacks; and Syrian artillery at the village of Nuqieb was chosen for retaliation. Although a paratroop battalion was available in the area, Chief of Staff Lt.Gen. Tzvi Tzur opted to deny himself 'the sure thing', and sent in GOLANI. The attack force was divided into five groups, with SAYERET GOLANI—commanded by Maj. Tzvika Ofer—in the vanguard. A surprise attack was impossible, as the only access was a narrow stretch of lakeside road. Upon crossing the frontier, SAYERET GOLANI found itself hampered by several Syrian ambushes, but managed to extricate itself and proceed to the gun positions at Nuqieb, while the remaining GOLANI units continued on to the village itself. Fifty-three Syrian soldiers were killed that night, GOLANI suffering seven dead and 43 wounded. Operation 'SNUNIT' firmly established GOLANI's operational reign in the north, and laid the solid foundations for a combat reputation equal to that of the paratroops.

A paratrooper fires his FN 7.62mm rifle at a Jordanian sniper just inside the Old City walls, 7 June 1967. (IGPO)

The 1967 War

Although the Six Day War began on 5 June, GOLANI received its orders to seize the Golan Heights from Syria only on 9 June. The steep cliffs were considered by many to be impassable under heavy fire, and were well defended by Syrian troops concentrated in a series of heavily fortified positions and forts.

The advance up the 1,500m-high slopes of the Golan Heights came under accurate Syrian fire. HABOK'IM HARISHONIM assaulted the fortifications at Tel A'ziziyat, seizing the position in a wide flanking attack, while BARAK was to neutralise and capture the fortifications at Tel Fahar. Tel Fahar was considered the easier target of the two, since it was a secondary position; it was, however, well entrenched, and protected by an extensive landmine network. It consisted of two observation posts, the northern one dominating the position.

BARAK had trained long and hard for this moment, and morale was high. Battalion commander Lt.Col. Musa Klein had instilled in his unit an *esprit de corps* best characterised by the notorious story of a young rifleman brought before Klein for a disciplinary offence, whose punishment was being ordered not to take part in the assault on Tel Fahar. He cried and pleaded with Klein until the

Excellent view of the equipment worn by a SAYERET SHIRION tank commander in Sinai, 9 June 1967. He wears olive tanker's coveralls, a modified ex-US Army pierced crash helmet with added communications equipment, and carries a Beretta M1951S in an olive canvas holster. (IDF Archives)

A SAYERET GOLANI sergeant cocks his weapon for the cameras, January 1968. He wears a black beret with infantry beret badge on red background, olive Class A fatigues, and tan-khaki webbing. Above the left breast pocket is the 1967 campaign ribbon, the 'Flying Leopard' SAYERET GOLANI reconnaissance wings, and basic parachutist wings, both wings with green (recon) background. (IDF Spokesman)

punishment was withdrawn. In other instances, injured officers escaped hospital beds to rejoin their units.

At 13:00 hours, following a massive air and artillery barrage, the battalion advanced towards Tel Fahar against a hail of small arms and anti-tank fire. The Syrian barrage made command and communications most difficult, and the extensive minefields did not allow a flanking assault. The battalion, now forced to attack Tel Fahar by frontal assault, split into squads of 14. These advanced along parallel paths to the outer perimeter fence, where soldiers ran over the backs of comrades who made human bridges by dropping on the coils of barbed wire. Many of the battalion's officers were killed in the attack, including Klein, felled by a sniper's bullet. The leaderless men were involved in a close-quarter battle to clear the trenches; where 52mm mortars were used at close ranges. SAYERET GOLANI was called in, assaulting the northern observation post to end the day's long battle. GOLANI lost 22 dead at Tel Fahar.

Following Tel Fahar, the brigade continued its advance through the Golan Heights, taking the 'capital' of the Heights, Kuneitra, while the GIDEON Bn. were heli-lifted by S-58s to the southern peak of Mt. Hermon. Thirteen positions in all were captured by the GOLANI Bde. during the two days of fighting, which left 59 dead and 160 wounded.

The War of Attrition

Immediately following the 1967 War, GOLANI found itself battling Palestinian guerrillas operating against the areas of Beit Shean and the northern Jordan Valley. They initiated difficult patrols along the undefined frontiers, as well as dozens of cross-

A sergeant from the NA'HA'L's 50th Para Bn. *c.*1968, displays the red paratroop beret with infantry beret badge, and NA'HA'L paratroop insignia worn above the basic parachutist wings. (IDF Archives)

border ambushes. On the northern frontier, GOLANI operated daily in the campaign against the Palestinian terrorist infrastructure in southern Lebanon: laying mines, preparing ambushes, and raiding known guerrilla targets. The bitter battles between GOLANI and the guerrillas in the harsh environs of 'Fatahland' (the area around the Lebanese slopes of Mt. Hermon) have become legendary. The largest operation of the period was the raid on the guerrilla base at the Lebanese village of Ya'atur, 13km from the Israeli border, on 27 December 1970. SAYERET GOLANI elements set a desperate pace along a rocky, virtually impassable path towards the target. Addressing Ya'atur's sentries in Arabic, the assault squads quickly seized control of the base, destroying the facilities.

In 1970–71 the Gaza Strip developed into a major hotbed of terrorist activity. OC Southern Command, Maj.Gen. 'Arik' Sharon, despatched recon paratroop and SAYERET GOLANI units to liquidate the terrorists at any cost, by any means. Operating in teams of four, many times wearing civilian clothing, and with fingers always on the trigger, these units sought out and destroyed the terrorists throughout Gaza.

The Yom Kippur War

The Syrian attack on the Golan Heights at 13:50 hours on 6 October 1973 found the GOLANI Bde. dispersed and in disarray. HABOK'IM HARISHONIM had just returned from an extended tour of duty in Gaza and was in the process of re-organisation; BARAK and SAYERET GOLANI were on holiday leave, and the other units were preparing for the brigade's 25th anniversary celebration in Tel Aviv. Only the GIDEON Bn. was at a high state of alert, manning the MUTZAVIM (fortifications) along the 'Purple Line' separating Israel and Syria. Thirteen GIDEON riflemen manned the ultra-sensitive Mt. Hermon observation post, which was quickly seized by Syrian commandos in the opening moments of fighting.

The Syrian attack was massive, and the MUTZAVIM were quickly surrounded; but the GIDEON squads held on for dear life, not relinquishing a single position. Sukhoi-7 fighter-bombers attempted to flush the defenders out, and some were shot down with .50 calibre machine gun fire; in all, GOLANI shot down 17 Syrian aircraft. Some of the MUTZAVIM were defended by as few as 15 soldiers, though squads from SAYERET GOLANI reinforced them at later intervals. BARAK fought near Hushniya, rescuing wounded tankers, while HABOK'IM HARISHONIM destroyed a heliborne Syrian commando force near Nafekh. Slowly the tide turned, and GOLANI joined in the counter-offensive into Syria. One major task still lay ahead; the recapture of the 'eyes and ears of Israel', Mt. Hermon.

A token attempt was made on 8 October when a composite company from SAYERET GOLANI led by SAYERET commander Capt. Shmaryahu Vinik, together with forces from ARAYOT HAGOLAN and HABOK'IM HARISHONIM, advanced up the narrow mountain paths on foot and by half-track. Syrian resistance was fierce, and following a relentless close-quarter fight, GOLANI retreated, suffering 25 dead and 57 wounded.

Thirteen days later, Mt. Hermon was retaken in

a two-brigade assault (together with the 317th Reserve Para Bde.)—Operation 'KINUACH'. HABOK'IM HARISHONIM put in a frontal assault, combing through the hills leading up to the Israeli observation post, while BARAK and ARAYOT HAGOLAN attacked from the south-east preventing any enemy retreat. SAYERET GOLANI attacked in the vanguard, racing uphill towards the upper cable car position, and pinning down the Syrian commando forces. The rocky terrain provided perfect cover for Syrian sniper teams, and every few yards advanced by GOLANI was paid for in blood. The battle for the upper cable car station was savage, and SAYERET GOLANI sustained heavy casualties in hand-to-hand combat including Capt. Vinik himself. (GOLANI lost many of its best officers during the war, including the deputy brigade commander, and the battalion commanders from the SAYERET, BARAK, and ARAYOT HAGOLAN.) At 23:00 hours on 21 October, the brigade flag was hoisted atop Mt. Hermon, and the bodies of the brigade's 55 dead and 79 wounded were lowered down.

GOLANI paid a high price during its 18 days of combat, suffering a total of 130 dead, and 310 wounded.

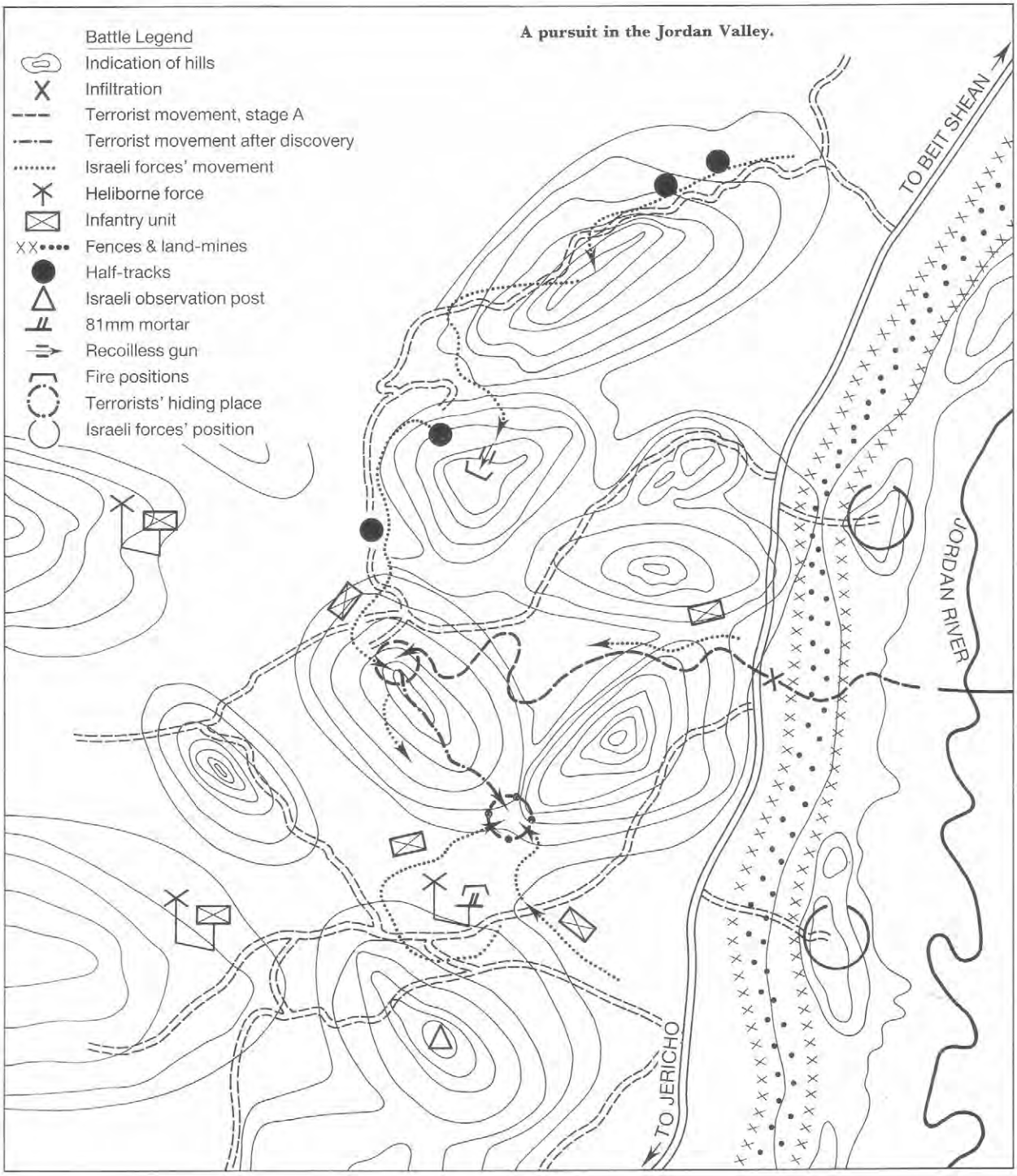
GOLANI vs. Terrorism

On 15 May 1974 a school house with over 90 students in the northern border town of Ma'alot was seized by three DFLP terrorists. SAYERET GOLANI stormed the building, but the terrorists turned their weapons first on the hostages, and subsequently on themselves: 25 students were killed, a further 70 wounded. This tragedy underscored the urgent need for rescue assault tactics to be refined. Later the following month, three *el-Fatah* terrorists landed by boat and seized a block of flats

Operation 'TOFET', 3 March 1968: paratroopers engage a PFLP machine gun nest in the outskirts of Karameh, affording excellent view of tan-khaki web gear, and the positioning of the canteens, grenade and magazine pouches. Note grenadier moving into position, left. (IDF Archives)

in Nahariya. With Ma'alot still fresh in their minds, a SAYERET GOLANI squad assaulted the target with stealth and speed. The results: three dead terrorists, no civilian or GOLANI casualties. Two years later, at Entebbe, SAYERET GOLANI was committed in a support rôle, taking part in the destruction of the Ugandan MiGs. Upon their return to Israel GOLANI was finally recognised as an élite unit: its soldiers discarded their despised khaki-green 'General Services' beret, and were issued with their own distinctive deep brown beret.

On 6 April 1980 a five-man terrorist team from the 'Arab Liberation Front' (ALF) crossed the Lebanese border and seized the nursery at Kibbutz



A pursuit in the Jordan Valley.

Misgav Am. The first attempt by SAYERET GOLANI to storm the building failed, as the heavily armed terrorists (even firing RPGs) stood fast, killing one recon infantryman—and a sleeping child for good measure. The second attempt succeeded but the outraged SAYERET vowed revenge.

Ten months after the ordeal at Misgav Am, on 22 February 1981, a force consisting of SAYERET GOLANI's best officers and NCOs, commanded by the brigade commander, landed by helicopter 5 km from the southern Lebanese village of El-Kfur, headquarters of the ALF. Force A, under the command of SAYERET GOLANI commander Capt. Guni Harnik set out on foot to blow up House 183, the ALF HQ. Force B would cover their advance, while Force C set out to ambush all terrorist vehicles on the northern road. The attack force was intimately familiar with ALF HQ, having studied aerial photographs, and practised the assault on a model of the ALF base for months. A wild fire-fight broke out as the surprised terrorists were hit in a lightning assault. In all 13 terrorists were killed and two houses destroyed—and Misgav Am was avenged.

Lebanon since 1982

When the IDF invaded Lebanon on 6 June 1982 launching Operation 'Peace for Galilee', SAYERET GOLANI was entrusted with the capture of the old crusader fortress, Beaufort Castle. It had long been used by the PLO as an artillery observation post, as almost the entire Galilee region was visible from this 717m perch, symbolising the PLO dominance over southern Lebanon. For SAYERET GOLANI, Beaufort Castle had become an obsession. The unit studied films of the position taken by Remote-Piloted Vehicles (RPVs), closely examining the castle's fortifications, trenches and communications system and seeking out the best assault routes and procedures.

The bloody conclusion of a SAYERET HARUV 'pursuit' of Palestinian guerrillas in the Jordan Valley near the Allenby Bridge, 18 June 1968. (IDF Spokesman)

On 6 June however, Chief of Staff 'Raful' Eitan and OC Northern Command Maj.Gen. Drori (GOLANI's OC in 1973) issued orders postponing the assault on Beaufort: the IDF invasion routes dictated bypassing the castle altogether. But the orders were 'lost in channels'; and by 16:00 hours, five hours behind schedule, the attack force reached the pre-staging point. Led by Lt. Motti Goldman and Capt. Gunni Harnik (who, awaiting his discharge from the army, returned to the unit of his own accord), the force consisted of men from SAYERET GOLANI, who were to take the forward positions, and HA'AN GOLANI, the brigade's sapper force. The fighting was fierce, with the Palestinians putting up a determined resistance; the GOLANI soldiers had to 'purify' bunker after bunker with grenades and automatic fire. Many of them ran out of ammunition, and AK-47s were stripped from the bodies of dead guerrillas. After six hours of brutal combat, in which satchel charges were used to breech the thick cement of the PLO positions, only one machine gun bunker remained. Lt. Goldman and Capt. Harnik advanced quickly, firing and throwing over 30 grenades in the process. Harnik was hit in the chest by an RPK burst; and in an act of desperation, Lt. Goldman hurled a sapper's charge towards the pit, destroying it in a cloud of smoke and debris. A more symbolic than militarily significant operation, the seizure of Beaufort Castle cost the small, close-knit unit seven dead and 15 wounded.

Beaufort was only 'round one' for GOLANI in Lebanon. GOLANI units were instrumental in assisting paratroop and armoured forces to clear the cities of Sidon and Damour, and in the eastern sector a force from SAYERET GOLANI was heli-lifted to the Beka'a Valley to join the fighting against the

Syrians. In an operation similar to the capture of Mt. Hermon and Beaufort Castle, SAYERET GOLANI led the brigade's successful capture of the Syrian intelligence-gathering position high atop Jebel Barouk from a determined Syrian commando force.

GOLANI was instrumental in the seizure of Kfar Sil, the Beirut suburb home of the PLO's command echelon. It was defended by a Syrian armoured and commando force, as well as 'commandos' from the PLO's crack 'Force 17'. Entering Kfar Sil, a mechanised GOLANI force was greeted by a murderous hail of anti-tank missile and small arms fire. The GOLANI units advanced, fighting their way into houses room by room, hand to hand. It took 19 hours for the battalion-size force to take control of Kfar Sil's kilometre-long main street; and Chief of Staff Eitan described the battle for Kfar Sil as the 'most brutal of the war'.

Kfar Sil gave easy access to Beirut International Airport; and GOLANI was once again assigned a difficult mission—to clear the slum neighbourhoods surrounding the airport of numerous PLO and leftist Muslim guerrilla defenders. The urban rubble provided perfect cover for the PLO anti-tank and sniper teams, who inflicted serious casualties on the GOLANI infantrymen. SAYERET GOLANI was called in, and with great care attacked each position as if it were assaulting a building where hostages were being held. The neighbourhood was neutralised, and the airport seized.

For three years following Operation 'Peace for Galilee', GOLANI units were highly active in the war against Shi'ite guerrillas in southern Lebanon, suffering dozens of casualties, and learning first hand the 'art' of a brutal counter-insurgency campaign. GOLANI remains on Israel's northern border, and inside the 10km wide security zone inside Lebanon, fulfilling its obligation as guardians of Israel's northern frontier.

The Naval Commandos

The Naval Commandos trace their roots to the PAL'YAM of the pre-independence struggle. Recruited among PAL'MACH fighters from Palestine's Mediterranean fishing villages, they received intensive underwater demolitions and amphibious assault training. The PAL'YAM assisted in bringing in illegal Jewish immigrants, though its most famous operation was the doomed attempt by the '23 of the *Sea Lion*' to destroy the oil facilities at Tripoli in 1941.

Following the Second World War, the PAL'YAM

Defence Minister Moshe Dayan and KA'TZ'HA'R Brig.Gen. Eitan (right) address paratroops during large-scale exercises, 1968. He wears the olive 'Bar-Lev' jacket with 'jump school' unit tag sewn to the left sleeve and a red beret with General Staff badge. (IDF Archives)

A SAYERET TZANHANIM platoon commander apprehensively examines a cave suspected of housing Palestinian guerrillas, Jordan Valley, 5 November 1968. He wears olive fatigues, and web gear including a series of olive pouches for UZI magazines. (IDF Archives)

went into action against the British, its frogmen blowing up several coastal launches and transports assisting in deporting Jews to Cyprus. During the 1948 War of Independence, the PAL'YAM became the HEYL HAYAM, or IDF/Navy, with all commando-type operations being conducted by the KOMMANDO YAMI (the Naval Commandos), and its small underwater demolitions unit. Considering their limited manpower and resources, they conducted several spectacular operations, including the sinking of the Syrian supply ship *Lino Bari*, and the Egyptian Navy flagship *Emir Farouk* employing Italian MTM-type explosive craft. Following the war, the Naval Commandos reorganised along the lines of the British SBS.

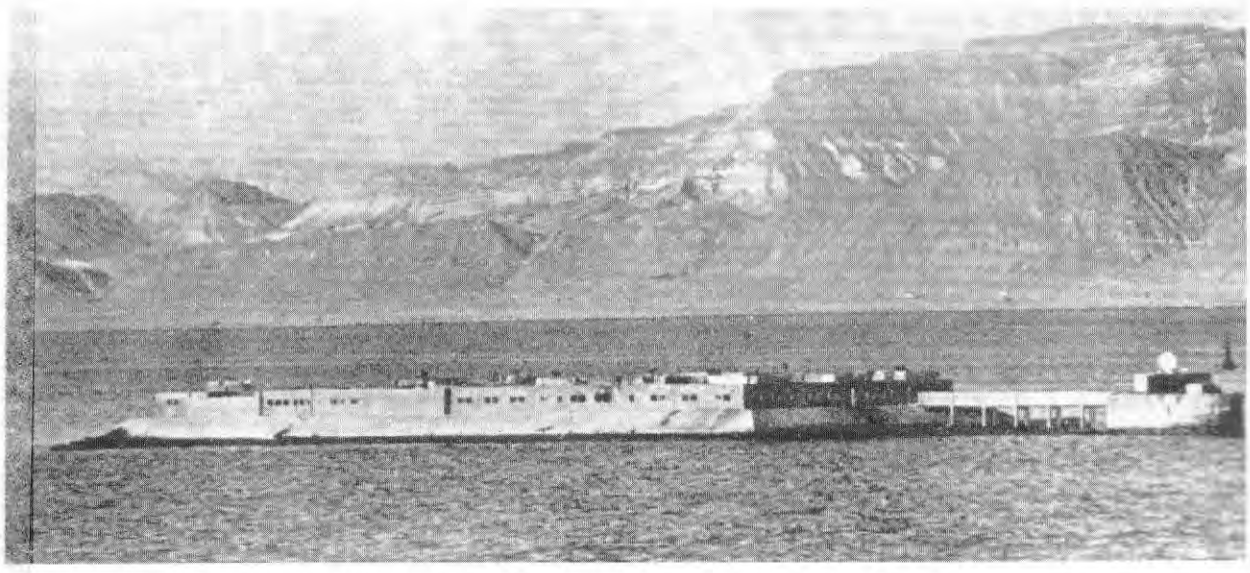
Volunteers for service in this prestigious unit underwent a battery of brutal physical and psychological tests before even being accepted for evaluation by KOMMANDO YAMI: acceptance did not guarantee one's position with the unit, as 'weeding out' continued during 18 months of harsh training. This included everything from basic diving to high speed automobile driving skills. This recruitment process, more stringent than that of any other IDF unit apart from the pilots' course, assured the Naval Commandos of a proud and unique status.

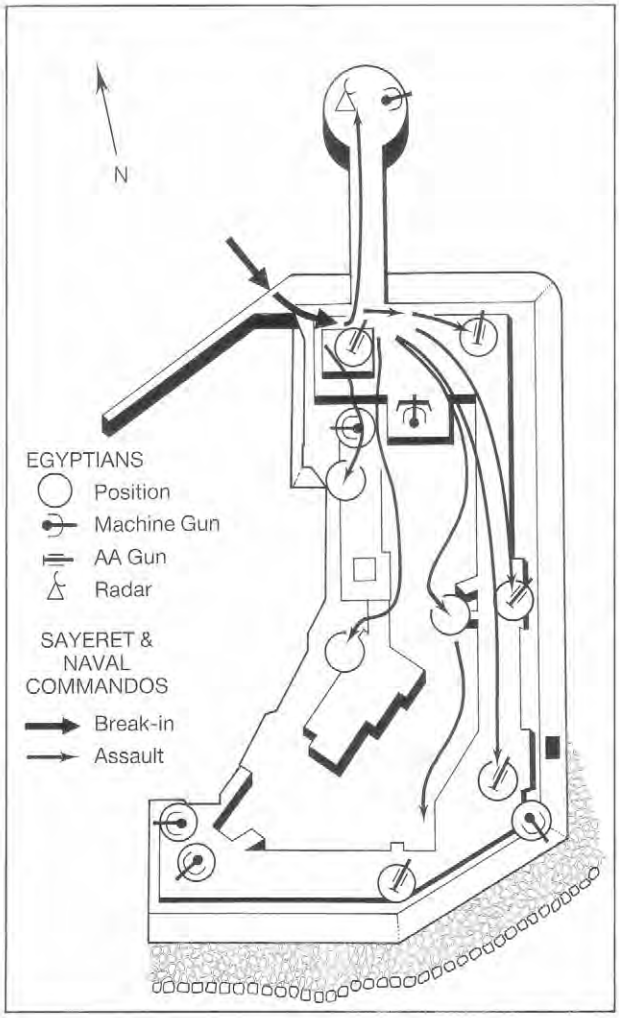
Between 1953 and 1967 the KOMMANDO YAMI performed hundreds of operations against targets in Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and points beyond. They were never officially mentioned in press despatches, and it was not until 1967 that the unit received 'official notice'. On 5 June 1967, at 19:00 hours, six frogmen set out from the submarine INS *Tanin* to raid the port of Alexandria. The Egyptians expected an attack, and vigilant patrols in the surrounding waters, complete with depth charges, led to the capture of the six Israelis.

During the War of Attrition the KOMMANDO YAMI operated against conventional military and guerrilla targets; their two most famous operations were against the Egyptian facilities at Ras el-Adabi'a and Green Island in the summer of 1969. The objective of the 21 June raid on Ras el-Adabi'a was the destruction of the Egyptian air defence and coastal radar stations, guarded by over 30 Egyptian commandos. The attack force, led by Lt.Col. Zeev Almog, reached Ras el-Adabi'a by rubber dinghy, and after a 100m swim through the shallows, proceeded to attack the rader stations with complete success: 32 Egyptians were killed, 12 were wounded, and the radars were destroyed.

The success of the Ras el-Adabi'a raid enforced the preference of the General Staff for using the Naval Commandos rather than recon paratroop and infantry forces. Research following the operation indicated that the raiding party fired only three shots per Egyptian soldier killed, while in similar operations paratroopers unloaded two full magazines of ammunition for each enemy soldier killed. The KOMMANDO YAMI were able to reach their targets by swimming and diving, then

An intelligence photograph of Green Island, July 1969: note radar position at far right. (IDF Archives)





Operation 'BULMUS', the raid on Green Island, 19 July 1969.

attacking the target as a ground force; and it was argued that it was easier to train the Naval Commandos for land operations than to train the paratroopers to swim and dive.

In July 1969 the General Staff decided to strike at Green Island, a man-made island situated in the southern approach to the Suez Canal, 3km south of Port Ibrahim. It was 145m long by 65m wide, complete with an air defence radar and a fort, five AA gun emplacements containing 37mm and 85mm guns, and 14 guns of 14.5mm to 25mm calibre for local defence. A hundred soldiers defended Green Island, including an '*As-Sa'iqa*' commando detachment. It was considered impregnable.

The raid was to be carried out by the Naval Commandos and SAYERET MAT'KAL (the paratroop reconnaissance force of the General Staff). The Naval Commandos were to establish a beachhead at the northern point of the island, and attack the garrison, while the SAYERET, landing from rubber dinghies, were to act as cover and provide the sappers.

At 23:00 hours on the night of 19–20 July the Naval Commandos leapt out of the Zodiac craft, and began their long swim towards Green Island, reaching the northern concrete slip below the radar tower two hours later. In complete silence, the six-man assault team cut through the barbed wire surrounding the tower at water level, undetected until an Egyptian sentry strolled by them, out for a quick smoke. He was quickly eliminated in a hail of tracer fire which shattered the night's calm. Joined now by other Naval Commandos, the team operated with clockwork precision, storming and neutralising the enemy firing positions.

Egyptian fire was at first wild and not direct, but as a pitched battle developed heavy casualties were inflicted on the Naval Commandos. The hand-to-hand fighting on the fort's roof was the most vicious. By now the SAYERET had reached the island, and joined the Naval Commandos in their attempts to neutralise all enemy opposition. Lt.Col. Almog declared the island secured, and ordered the SAYERET sappers to set the explosive charges. At 02:55 hours, as the force set out back to base, they were followed by Egyptian shore guns, but also by the sound of their explosives destroying much of the island. Following the operation, KA'TZ'HA'R Eitan called the Naval Commandos 'the élite young men of the State of Israel'.

The success of Operation 'BULMUS' ('Obsession') secured further employment for the Naval Commandos and on 7 September, the Egyptian naval base at Ras Sadat was attacked and two P-138 torpedo boats sunk. Egyptian naval commandos were also quite active during the War of Attrition, sinking IDF/Navy vessels in the port of Eilat. Several KOMMANDO YAMI underwater demolitions experts were killed attempting to remove Egyptian explosive devices from the hulls of ships. The final known action of the Naval Commandos was the establishment of a beachhead for the recon paratroop force in Operation 'BARDAS 54-55' on 20–21 February 1973.

1: FO'SH fighter; Lower Galilee, 1937
2: PAL'MACHNIK, HAREL Bde.; Jerusalem, 1948
3: PAL'MACHNIKIT, NEGEV Bde., 1948

1: Paratrooper, 1950
2: Sergeant, paratroopers, 1951
3: Captain, 890th Para Bn., 1954

B

1: Commando, Unit 30, 1952
2: Commando, Unit 101, 1953
3: Paratrooper , 890th Para Bn., 1955

C

1: Paratrooper, 88th NA'HA'L Bn., 1956
2: Recon infantryman, SAYERET GOLANI, 1961
3: Recon paratrooper, SAYERET TZANHANIM, 1964

D

1: Paratrooper, 202nd Para Bn., 1966
2: Radioman, 55th Reserve Para Bde., 1967
3: Recon infantryman, SAYERET GOLANI, 1967

1: Paratrooper, HA'AN TZANHANIM, 1968
2: Captain, SAYERET HARUV, 1968
3: NA'HA'L paratrooper, 1969

1: Naval Commando, 1969
2: Recon paratrooper, SAYERET TZANHANIM, 1970
3: 2nd Lt., SAYERET EGOZ, 1972
4: Recon paratrooper, SAYERET MAT'KAL, 1972

1: 1st Lt., SAYERET SHIRION, 1970
2: Sgt. Candidate, SAYERET GOLANI, 1969
3: Naval Commando, 1972

1: Commando, SAYERET MAT'KAL, 1973
2: 2nd Lt., SAYERET GOLANI, 1973
3: Recon paratrooper, SAYERET SHAKED, 1973

1: Recon infantryman, SAYERET GOLANI, 1982
2: Sniper, YA'MA'M Border Guards, 1982
3: Recon paratrooper, SAYERET TZANHANIM, 1985

J

1: 2nd Lt., YA'MA'M Border Guards, 1985
2: Cpl., 50th NA'HA'L Para Bn., 1986
3: Senior Master Sgt., SAYERET HADRUZIM, 1986

1: Parachute instructor, 1987
2: 1st Lt., IDF/AF Aeromed. Evac. Unit, 1987
3: Sgt., SHU'ALEI SHIMSHON 1987

L

During the 1973 War the Naval Commandos' unique talents were once again needed. On the night of 16–17 October four KOMMANDO YAMI demolitions experts made their way through the underwater net protecting Port Said: one pair attached mines to two Egyptian landing craft, but the other pair, tragically, never returned from the operation.

The Egyptian naval base at A'ardaqa was no stranger to the KOMMANDO YAMI. On 9, 11, and 18 October 1973 Naval Commandos attacked the base, succeeding in sinking a 'Komar' Fast Attack Craft. On the night of 21 October, OC IDF/Navy Maj.Gen. Binyamin Telem ordered that LAW anti-tank rockets be rushed to the Naval Commandos in Sinai: A'ardaqa was to be hit yet again. At 22:00 hours on 21 October a Naval Commando force set out on their mission, the destruction of another 'Komar' at A'ardaqa. After a six-hour journey, the commandos managed to get within 120m of the advancing ship. They were spotted, however, and the shore batteries opened up on the commandos, who now closed the range to 40m. All the LAWs fired missed their marks, except for the last one they had, which scored a direct hit, turning the 'Komar' into a ball of flame. Intelligence reports later confirmed a symbolic finale to the operation. The 'Komar' that had been sunk was the one which, six years earlier on 21 October 1967, fired the salvo of 'Styx' missiles which sank the IDF/Navy flagship INS *Eilat*; and exactly 25 years earlier, the commander of the raid on A'ardaqa, Maj.Gen.(Res.) Yochai Ben-Nun, had commanded the operation which resulted in the sinking of the *Emir Farouk*.

In the IDF's campaign against terrorism, the KOMMANDO YAMI has made numerous raids against Palestinian targets in Lebanon and throughout the Middle East. On the night of 8 June 1978 a team raided the PLO Naval Commando base at Dahr el-Burj in Lebanon, destroying numerous buildings and killing dozens of terrorists. In fact, the Naval Commandos enjoyed making routine landings along the Lebanon coast, a habit which came in useful on the night of 6–7 June 1982, when OC IDF/Navy Maj.Gen. Zeev Almog ordered the KOMMANDO YAMI to prepare a bridgehead on the Al-Awali coast for the largest amphibious landing in IDF history.

Most of the KOMMANDO YAMI's operations since have remained highly classified, the aura of secrecy surrounding the unit contributing to their mystique as well as to their operational survival.

Territorial and other Reconnaissance Units

In addition to 'regular' paratroop and infantry reconnaissance units, the IDF maintains several territorial and other recon commando formations.

SAYERET SHAKED

The oldest of the three territorial paratroop reconnaissance forces, SAYERET SHAKED ('Almond') was Southern Command's response to Arab guerrilla and Egyptian Military Intelligence in-

Recon paratroopers from SAYERET EGOZ prepare for a night ambush inside Lebanese territory, January 1969. The FN rifleman still wears his black beret with infantry beret badge on red background; and tan-khaki web gear over his olive field jacket. The soldier at right wears the 'Bar-Lev' jacket and woollen balaclava/cap, and carries the magazines for his AK-47 in a captured khaki canvas pouch. (IDF Archives)

Wearing tan-khaki field jackets, NA'HA'L paratroopers prepare for their journey home following the successful completion of Operation 'TARNEGOL 53', 27 December 1969—the capture of the P-12 radar at Ras Arab. (IDF Archives)

filtration in the Negev Desert. The successors to the GIVA'ATI Bde.'s recon force SHU'ALEI SHIMSHON, SHAKED patrolled the desert on foot, by jeep and even on camel. It was a truly integrated unit, and its most famous commander was Lt.Col. Amos Yarkoni, a Bedouin, who prior to 1948 had even taken part in anti-Jewish guerrilla activities. The Bedouins brought to SHAKED the inherited arts of desert tracking and warfare.

During the 1967 War the unit was split into small sections, acting as reconnaissance scouts to the IDF divisions advancing into Sinai. The first recon force to engage Egyptian commandos on the east bank of the Canal during the War of Attrition, it initiated hundreds of 'pursuits' along the Canal, and in the Arava Desert near Jordan. These anti-terrorist/commando operations transformed the small unit into an élite strike force, mobilised at a moment's notice for the most difficult of tasks. During the anti-terrorist campaign in Gaza, 1970–73, SHAKED performed brilliantly, utilising its speed and integrated manpower with astounding results.

SHAKED participated in the early containment battles against the Egyptians in the 1973 War, eventually crossing the Canal to battle Egyptian commandos. It last saw combat during the 1982 Lebanon War as a mechanised recon force, participating in, among other actions, the blood-letting at the Ein el-Hilweh refugee camp. It was disbanded in 1983, its command echelon forming the nucleus of the reborn GIVA'ATI Infantry Brigade.

SAYERET EGOZ

In 1956 OC Northern Command Gen. Yitzhak Rabin ordered the formation of SAYERET EGOZ ('Walnut'), a Command reconnaissance force to secure the northern frontier and act as the Command's mobile intelligence-gathering unit: a monumental task for a unit numbering only 20 soldiers and three Bedouin trackers. In 1965, Maj. Haim Sela was appointed EGOZ's commander; an ex-NA'HA'L and GOLANI officer, Sela transformed EGOZ into a 'fighting battalion', and during the 1967 War led in the capture of Kuneitra[1].

Following the 1967 War, EGOZ faced its most challenging operational task, preventing terrorist infiltration from northern Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. This stretched EGOZ's manpower to the limit, and it was the norm for an EGOZ fighter to participate in over 300 ambushes a year! EGOZ was involved in countless cross-river operations, hitting training and staging areas across the Yarmouk, Jordan, and Litani rivers. Its most famous operational zone was Lebanon, and EGOZ fighters endured harsh climatic conditions in their hundreds of spectacular raids against terrorist bases. Their largest raid was Operation 'KALAHAT 4' in the autumn of 1972, a direct response to the murder of 11 Israeli athletes at Munich; this involved the entire SAYERET, as well as elements from GOLANI and the BARAK Armoured Brigade. SAYERET EGOZ was disbanded in 1973.

SAYERET HARUV

In 1966 Chief of Staff Lt.Gen. Yitzhak Rabin authorised the formation of a Central Command reconnaissance force known as SAYERET HARUV ('Carob'), to operate along the Jordanian border. During the 1967 War a HARUV task force attempted to seize *el-Fatah* commander 'Abu Ammar' (Yasir Arafat), who fled Ramallah for safe haven in Jordan. Following the war HARUV became HATIVAT HABIKA'A's élite strike force, taking the forefront in the desert pursuits of guerrilla infiltrators. The unit received little rest or reward for their daily and costly operations, though many new volunteers chose HARUV for the challenge it posed. By 1968 the security situation in the Jordan Valley warranted the unit's expansion, and HARUV became a

[1]In 1982 Col.(Res.) Sela was killed in action just south of Beirut.

battalion, incorporating into its arsenal new weapons systems including Bell-205 helicopters, and infra-red and electronic detection devices.

HARUV's pursuits in the Jordan Valley took a harsh toll on the small unit, which suffered heavy casualties, especially among its officers. One such casualty was HARUV commander, Lt.Col. Tzvi Ofer (SAYERET GOLANI commander during the Nuqieb raid), killed during a pursuit in Wadi Kelet on 20 December 1968: like Lt.Col. Regev and Lt. Manela before him, Ofer paid the price so often demanded of an élite unit commander in the IDF. HARUV's most impressive tally was achieved just prior to Independence Day 1969 when, in a series of well-executed ambushes, it terminated 23 infiltration attempts, killing 21 guerrillas in the process. HARUV crossed the border into Jordan on countless occasions, many times in week-long operations deep into enemy territory. During the 1973 War HARUV fought with Maj.Gen. Adan Bren's division near Suez. In the last two days of fighting HARUV—a unit which never exceeded 1,000 men—lost 33 dead. Following the war HARUV was sent in against terrorists in Gaza, ending an era for the unit. Its mission in the Jordan Valley had been accomplished, with the most desirable reward of all: peace on the frontier.

SAYERET HADRUZIM

Druze, Bedouin and Circassian Muslims have volunteered into the IDF ever since the incorporation of the *Arab el-Hai'b* Bedouin tribe into the PAL'MACH (forming the PAL'*Hai'b*) during the 1948 War. They were basically segregated into 'Minorities Unit 300', though outstanding soldiers were accepted into the territorial reconnaissance formations, as well as into the ranks of the GOLANI Brigade. The Druze distinguished themselves as far more than token trackers and Arab soldiers of

An excellent study of a SAYERET GOLANI radioman firing his UZI in 'Fatahland', January 1970. Note AN/PRC-25 carried on an infantry packboard inside a tan rucksack. (IDF Archives)

Recon paratroopers from SAYERET TZANHANIM wearing specially designed olive nylon 'commando' web gear (the forerunner of the IDF load-bearing equipment worn today) prepare to be heli-lifted home following Operation 'RODOS', the day-long raid against the Egyptian garrison at Shedwan Island, 22 January 1970. Note Super Frelon helicopter with IAF markings. (IGPO)

fortune; and in 1959 they were paid the compliment of being conscripted into military service.

Many Druze advanced quickly in the IDF and National Police Border Guards, achieving senior ranks. The notion for a separate Druze reconnaissance unit was the brainchild of Maj.(Res.) Muhamad Mulah, a fiercely loyal officer, who was determined not to waste his people's combat potential. Following the 1967 War, Maj. Mulah presented a plan to Chief of Staff Lt.Gen. Haim Bar-Lev calling for the formation of a Druze paratroop recon unit, able to parachute into the Druze areas in Syria should war with Syria break out. Bar-Lev liked the idea, and SAYERET HADRUZIM was born.

SAYERET HADRUZIM's operational zone was the northern frontier. It served as a symbol of pride to young Druze conscripts, who considered the wearing of the SAYERET HADRUZIM reconnaissance wings a more prized status than being a 'regular' IDF unit tracker. During the 1982 Lebanon War, SAYERET HADRUZIM served with distinction, proving its élite status during the difficult campaign against Palestinian guerrillas. Lebanon was a difficult war for the Druze: Lebanon's Druze community was often at odds with occupying IDF, and the Shi'ite Muslims viewed the Druze as 'infidels' or non-believers, and often targeted SAYERET HADRUZIM personnel and patrols for the harshest of terrorist attacks. Nevertheless, not one Druze refused service in Lebanon throughout the three year IDF presence.

SAYERET MAT'KAL

SAYERET MAT'KAL is certainly the most mysterious of all the IDF's élite units; its organisation, training routine, and operational history remain highly classified, and official mentions are rare. Commonly referred to as the 'Chief of Staff's Boys', SAYERET MAT'KAL (General Staff Reconnaissance) is the

A patrol from SAYERET SHAKED prepare for the morning run between Bar-Lev Line fortifications, February 1970. They wear olive DUBON winter parkas and carry AK-47s; note AK ammo pouch on pistol belt of officer standing in the centre, also wearing khaki canvas grenade pouches, and smoke grenades. (IDF Archives)

IDF's covert response to the most dire national security needs. Their *rumoured* exploits know no bounds, ranging from leading the IDF raid at Entebbe, to assisting MOSSAD hit teams in Europe. Their first official recognition followed the assault on Green Island.

On 8 May 1972, four 'Black September' terrorists (including two women) hijacked a Belgian Sabena Boeing 707 on a routine flight from Brussels to Lod. Audaciously landing in Israel, the terrorists demanded the release of 100 imprisoned Arabs in exchange for not blowing up the aircraft. The IDF response was immediate, and General Staff Operations chief Col. Emmanuel Shaked summoned the 'Chief of Staff's Boys' led by Maj. Ehud Barak. The men of SAYERET MAT'KAL had trained for months for the possibility of dealing with a hijacked airliner; and while Defence Minister Dayan played for time, entering into false negotiations with the terrorists, the commandos practised their assault techniques on an EL AL 707 at the Israel Aircraft Industries terminal nearby.

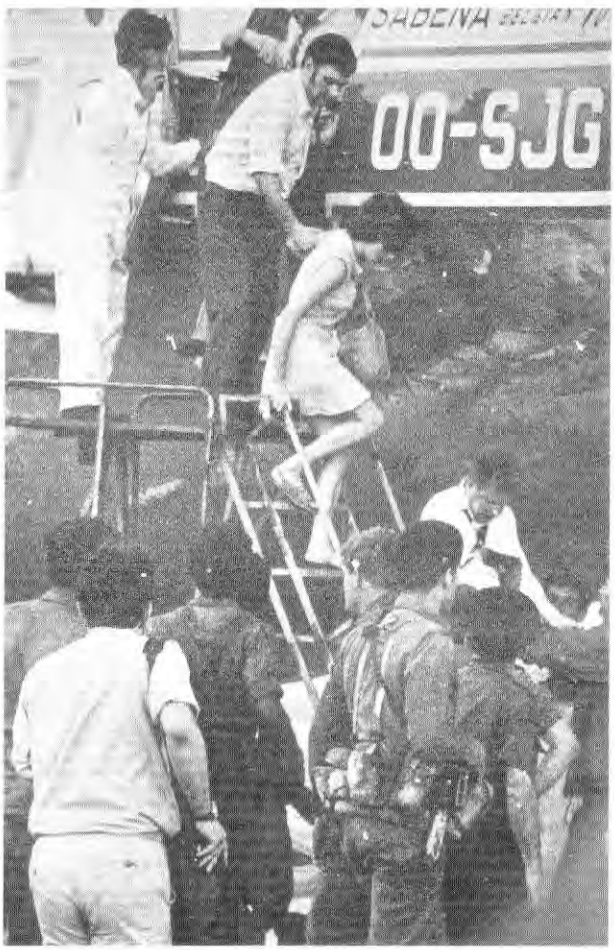
The first stage of the operation was the immobilisation of the aircraft by a commando team complemented by EL AL technicians, who drained the hydraulic fluid from the undercarriage and the brakes. Next, a busload of 'Arab prisoners' (actually dark-complexioned Israeli soldiers with shaven heads) was brought to within eyesight of the cockpit to give the terrorists the feeling of imminent victory. Meanwhile, in the airport's main terminal, the commando team received its final briefing for the rescue mission. They were to burst through the three emergency exit doors in groups of four, eliminate the terrorists immediately, and evacuate the aircraft. All the commandos wore white EL AL technicians' overalls, and carried 9mm Berettas.

The terrorists, confident of their victory, granted permission for the aircraft to be serviced for flight. As the Defence Minister, Chief of Staff, and dozens of senior officers observed from the watchtower, the

commandos headed towards the Boeing on EL AL tractors. At 16:10 hours on 9 May the explosive charges applied to the exits detonated, and the commandos entered the aircraft. Amongst the confusion and smoke, they proceeded to kill the two male terrorists and wounded the two women, in just 34 seconds! The next day the press made no mention of the unit, identifying them only as the 'angels in white'.

The following month the 'angels in white' struck against terrorism again, though this time in a more unconventional manner. Operation 'ARGAZ BET' on 26 June 1972 was a classic commando operation intended to expose the Syrian connection with terrorist acts against Israel. The objective: to kidnap five ranking Syrian Military Intelligence officers in southern Lebanon and hold them as 'human ransom' for three IAF pilots held in Syrian and Egyptian jails. The raiding party was hand-picked, and read like a 'Who's Who' of the IDF's élite, including Maj. Ehud Barak (a former head of Military Intelligence, the current deputy Chief of Staff, and the IDF's most decorated soldier), Capts. Yoni Netanyahu and Muki Batzar (later ground force and deputy commanders at Entebbe). Not since the times of Meir Har-Zion had a commando force been used to kidnap enemy soldiers. Operation 'ARGAZ BET' was carried out by the commandos supported by armoured, SAYERET GOLANI and EGOZ elements. After a brief fire-fight five Syrian officers, including a major-general, were POWs: weeks later the pilots were released.

Commandos from SAYERET MAT'KAL evacuate the passengers of the *Sabena* Boeing 707 at Lod Airport, following the successful storming of the airliner on 9 May 1972. Note 'white angel' on steps, still clutching his Beretta M1951S. (IGPO)



On 10 April 1973 the commandos once again led a large-scale IDF assault, this time in Operation 'AVIV NE'URIM'. On 10 April at 01:30 hours, a team of 30 MOSSAD agents, SAYERET commandos, and recon paratroopers slipped ashore on Beirut's Dove Beach secured by Naval Commandos, and were driven to their targets in cars rented by fellow MOSSAD agents[1]. 'Force ALEPH', commanded by Maj. Barak, proceeded towards the apartment complex housing three of 'Black September's' top ranking officials, killed them, and relieved the premises of its memos and files. 'Force BET' (including a HA'AN TZANHANIM contingent) attacked the headquarters of the DFLP, while a third group attacked 'Black September's' Beirut bomb factory. IAF fighters flew cover overhead, while helicopters evacuated the dead and wounded, helped remove captured files, and dropped spiked 'crows' feet' to prevent Palestinian road pursuit of the attack force. It was Israel's most spectacular response to terrorism, and the last which has ever been officially attributed to SAYERET MAT'KAL.

* * *

The IAF's Aeromedical Evacuation Unit (AEU), and the National Police Border Guard's YA'MA'M (anti-terrorist unit) have emerged as small, embryonic élite forces whose performance in the Lebanon war was highly impressive. Although its function is to rescue downed pilots in enemy territory, the AEU succeeded in evacuating 2,518 IDF casualties from battlefields throughout Leb-

[1]Maj. Barak awaited the commandos in a rented car disguised as a blonde woman!

anon, bringing them to hospitals in Israel in record time. The unit is a highly professional and secretive force, made up almost exclusively of NCOs and officers. Only the best helicopter pilots are allowed to volunteer for the unit, in which all must undergo a gruelling 'modified' paratroop basic training, followed by intense medical, survival, and combat training. Most recently, in a dramatic rescue operation, the AEU recovered a downed F-4 pilot in southern Lebanon on 16 October 1986 in a desperate race against time, with the pilot clinging for dear life to a Bell-209 Cobra all the way back to Israel.

The YA'MA'M was formed after the Munich Olympics massacre, and has developed into one of the world's best police anti-terrorist formations, training, among others, West Germany's GSG-9. Not part of the IDF proper, the YA'MA'M joined other Border Guard units in Lebanon when IDF commanders found themselves incapable of dealing with the Palestinian and Muslim guerrilla threat. The YA'MA'M led the Border Guard effort in this often brutal war of pursuits and ambushes; and although they numbered less than one per cent of the total Israeli invasion force, they captured over 65 per cent of all the top Palestinian terrorist commanders in southern Lebanon.

In 1987, however, it appears that a relatively young unit has wrested a place among the IDF's élite. The GIVA'ATI Infantry Brigade was re-activated in late 1983 as a marine-type strike force, following the successful amphibious landings on the coast of Sidon in 1982. The brigade and its reconnaissance battalion SHU'ALEI SHIMSHON, like GOLANI before it, trained twice as hard as other units to prove itself—a feat accomplished successfully, since in the years which followed it beat both the paratroops and GOLANI in brigade-level exercises, as well as performing brilliantly at the difficult security tasks in southern Lebanon. GIVA'ATI was rewarded for its efforts and new-found élite status, receiving its own distinctive purple beret.

The Plates

A1: FO'SH fighter, Lower Galilee, 1937
Note combination of civilian, British, and HAGANAH-produced articles. The Turkish style *kolpak* hat had been adopted by the NOTRIM, or Jewish Settlement Police, and since many FO'SH fighters were NOTRIM themselves, it was worn on many patrols, as were British sun helmets or bush hats. The ammunition pouches are also of British origin, though HAGANAH workshops copied them in cheaper forms. The .303 SMLE and khaki drill shorts were probably stolen from a drunken Tommy in Tel Aviv by one of the many HAGANAH 'acquisition units'. The FO'SH were the best-equipped of HAGANAH units at the time, presenting an identifiable military appearance. Of interest is the Lewis gun—rare and risked only when heavily-armed Arab opposition was expected.

With cloth covering his face from dust as well as providing a certain degree of anonymity, a SAYERET GOLANI platoon commander co-ordinates his unit's movement during a raid against Palestinian guerrilla targets in southern Lebanon, July 1972. He wears olive fatigues including three-pocket trousers, and Israeli M-1 helmet fitted with tan netting secured by rubber tubing. The rank of SEGEN is indicated by the khaki shoulder strap slides with two green stencilled bars. Note captured AK ammo pouch worn across shoulder, and German military flashlight. (IDF Archives)

A2: PAL'MACHNIK, HAREL Brigade, Jerusalem, 1948
The departure of the British 6th Airborne Division from Palestine in 1948 coincided with the

acquisition by the PAL'MACH of the majority of its military clothing. The Denison smock, woollen 'cap comforter', and camouflage 'face veil' are worn with US Army ammunition pouches and civilian khaki trousers. This fighter carries a Lee Enfield Mk.IV rifle fitted with a sniper-scope and a flame-thrower produced by the IRGUN TZAVA LEUMI, the right-wing terror group led by Menachem Begin. Though the PAL'MACH and the IRGUN were at the opposite ends of the political spectrum, wartime needs sometimes necessitated sharing equipment. Note the German P-38 pistol and Mills grenade worn on the belt.

Paratroopers from SAYERET TZANHANIM prepare to move out against Egyptian positions at the Chinese Farm, 16 October 1973. Note grenadier carrying rifle grenades in his tan canvas '37 small pack, and propellant cartridges attached to his web gear. The soldier with the RPG-7 carries the rockets in a captured ammunition bag, later reproduced by the IDF Ordnance Corps when the IDF absorbed the weapon into full line service. (IDF Archives)

A3: PAL'MACHNIKIT, NEGEV Brigade; Negev Desert, 1948
This PAL'MACHNIKIT wears a typical assortment of left over British and indigenous articles. The ex-British battledress blouse was probably retrieved from the trash bin of a military base, while the '37 webbing equipment was purchased on Palestine's thriving 'black market'. Ammunition for the HAGANAH copy of the Sten Mk.II 9mm sub-machine gun is carried in a tan canvas German MP40 pouch. Equipment from all over the world was seen in the 1948 War of Independence, as HAGANAH agents abroad sent home any type of military equipment they could find, ranging from canteen covers to fighter planes. The .303 SMLE has been fitted with a HAGANAH device for firing Mills grenades: the HAGANAH loved to 'tinker', and their infant arms industry managed to produce everything from nail bombs to mortars made from sewage pipes.

B1: Paratrooper, 1950

The most pressing problem the first paratroopers faced was the acquisition of safe parachutes: unable to afford new equipment, they were forced to jump with second-hand 'chutes which had been on their way to the shirt factory! Needless to say, training fatalities were demoralisingly high. This TZANHAN's parachuting gear is entirely British: a British jump helmet (with crudely stencilled IDF parachutist wings), and a British X-type parachute. The tan-khaki fatigues (an ironed and pressed version of which doubled for the soldier's Class A uniform) are Israeli-produced, and worn with an olive fatigue sweater. The weapon is an MP40.

B2: Paratrooper, 1951

One of the earliest Class A uniforms adopted by the paratroopers was the sand khaki shirt and trousers, adorned with cloth parachutist wings (replaced in 1953 by the metal variant worn to this day). The red beret, infantry HEYL RAGLIM beret badge (with red plastic backing indicating combat service), and brown leather paratroop boots are all basic elements of the paratrooper's uniform worn to this day. This sergeant or SAMAL (note crude horizontal stripes) also wears the 1948 campaign ribbon above the left breast pocket. The Czecho-slovak K98 7.92mm Mauser rifle, fitted with an Israeli-produced bayonet, was the most common weapon of the period.

B3: Captain, 890th Paratroop Battalion, 1954

The Battledress Class A uniform was standard issue in the IDF until the mid-1970s (the Air Force was issued with a blue-grey version, the Navy with a navy blue equivalent). It was a direct copy of the British uniform, though the climate faded it to an olive appearance. The embroidered 'snake and wings' unit patch sewn to the upper left arm at first represented the 890th Para Bn., and has been retained by the progressively re-numbered 'regular army' paratroop brigade to this day. The dark olive tie and white shirt were restricted to special occasions, and were seldom seen after 1954. The metal parachutist wings are worn with a blue background; and the red lanyard represents instructor status. The rank of SEREN is indicated by three bronze metal bars with a pressed sword and leaf crest, worn on a red background on dark olive

A SAYERET GOLANI squad engages Syrian commandos near the IDF observation post atop Mt. Hermon, 21 October 1973. The foreground man has inserted padding under his heavy ammunition pouches. (IDF Archives)

shoulder strap slides. The IDF brass pins are worn on both collar points with red backing, and were required on all Battledress Class A uniforms.

C1: Commando, Unit 30; Hebron, 1952

The Unit 30 commandos were regarded as partisans and guerrillas, and they behaved in such a manner. Military discipline was non-existent, as was military dress on or off base. In the field they wore whatever suited their needs best, from Bedouin garb to camouflage uniforms bought commercially. This commando, face blackened for a night ambush, wears a British-style knitted 'cap comforter', a British 1942 windproof camouflage smock, and tan Israeli fatigue trousers with two large cargo pockets. An Israeli copy of the British '37 large pack carries the .303 Bren gun ammunition.

C2: Commando, Unit 101; Samua, 1953

Like the men of Unit 30, Unit 101 seldom wore proper military attire on or off base. This led to several nasty confrontations with the Military Police, making the latter as unpopular with Unit 101 as the Jordanian Arab Legion! This commando on an ambush against Jordanian positions near Samua wears a typical assortment of uniform items.

The SAYERET GOLANI task force which rescued the nursery at Kibbutz Misgav Am reconstruct their assault for the benefit of the press. Note Kevlar bulletproof assault vests with built-in canteen and communications gear pouches. The assault leader carries a Beretta M1951S and the soldiers UZIs, as the close-quarter battle did not justify the use of the GALIL assault rifle. (IMoD)

The battledress jacket is worn here complete with parachutist wings. The plain white *kefiyeh* doubled as a scarf, and a simple disguise. The .45 Thompson gun, here with two magazines taped together, was a favoured weapon, as was the German MP40 9mm sub-machine gun. Indigenous Israeli web gear is worn, most notably the tan-khaki canvas pouch for holding the Tommy-gun magazines, which was later developed to carry magazines for the UZI—yet to enter full service. A K98 bayonet is tucked into the pistol belt. The bush hat was the preferred headgear of '101', in direct reference to the SNS and PAL'MACH.

C3: Paratrooper, 890th Paratroop Battalion; Kilkilya, 1955

This paratrooper carries an interesting product of IDF Ordnance Corps 'tinkering', a K98 fitted with a grenade-firing device, seen here with an Israel Military Industries anti-tank rifle grenade. The khaki fatigue uniform is standard for the period, worn here with British '37 web gear including the large pack, and US-style Israeli-produced canteens. The US M-1 helmet has been crudely fitted with tan camouflage netting, and tan leggings are worn with the brown leather paratroop boots.

D1: Paratrooper, 88th NA'HA'L Battalion; Mitla Pass, 29 October 1956

This illustrates the marked improvement in weaponry and equipment issued to the Israeli soldier since the inception of the IDF in 1948. His uniform consists of Israeli olive fatigue trousers with two large cargo pockets, and Israeli-produced field jacket and brown paratroop boots. The British jump helmet has been fitted with tan netting held by tan rubber tubing. His web gear consists of a pouch for carrying up to 10 magazines for his 9mm UZI sub-machine gun, and a grenade pouch. A Smith & Wesson No.2 .380 revolver is carried in the khaki canvas holster, and a commercial knife might also be worn on the pistol belt. The UZI, seen here fitted with the early wooden stock, was made famous by the paratroopers at Mitla.

D2: Recon infantryman, SAYERET GOLANI; Nuqieb, 1961

The GOLANI Bde's raid on the fortified Syrian positions at Nuqieb marked GOLANI's acceptance as an élite unit—especially its reconnaissance battalion, SAYERET GOLANI. This recon infantryman wears the standard olive fatigue blouse and trousers, black combat boots, and fatigue sweater. The Israeli-produced pouches were specifically designed to carry the Israeli produced 7.62mm FN FAL assault rifle magazines. A '37 small pack holds explosives; note also that two canteens were worn. Many GOLANI soldiers placed grenades inside their canteen pouches after the heavy mud encountered at Nuqieb made drinking from those canteens unsafe.

D3: Recon paratrooper, SAYERET TZANHANIM, 1964

During 1956–1967 France was Israel's largest

A SAYERET TZANHANIM squad prepares to storm a PFLP-GC stronghold near Sidon, 7 June 1982. They wear the new EPHOD or web gear, Kevlar flak vests, and crudely camouflaged Kevlar infantry ballistic helmets, and carry GALIL (long barrelled with bipod) and GLILON (short-barrelled) 5.56mm assault rifles. Note squad medic carrying stretcher on an infantry packboard, and squad gunner with FN MAG 7.62mm light machine gun with khaki canvas ammunition bag. (IMoD)

supplier of military equipment; and one of the most sought-after items was the 'lizard-pattern' camouflage fatigue uniform, issued only to élite units. The IDF had always been apprehensive about camouflage, but the free offer of large stocks of uniforms (of both French airborne and general service types) was too tempting for the budget-conscious IDF to ignore. They remained in active service until 1968, when Palestinian guerrillas began wearing the same or very similar uniforms. This SEGEN (first lieutenant) wears the lizard-pattern fatigue blouse and trousers. Rank is indicated by the 'out of uniform' Class A bronze metal bars with red background on tan field slides. The EFA-672-12 (IS) main parachute with 'line first canopy deployment' is worn, as is the T-10-R (IS) reserve. An Israeli-produced 3.5 in. bazooka is carried in the tan canvas weapon bag, and a smaller ammunition bag is worn under the reserve 'chute; note the folding-stock UZI. Note the M-1 helmet fitted with tan netting, supporting the soldier's 'daily fix' of cigarettes.

E1: Paratrooper, 202nd Paratroop Battalion; Samua, 13 November 1966

This corporal returning from Operation 'MAGRESA' wears an interesting combination of a lizard-pattern smock over an IDF so-called 'battledress jacket' with black fur collar. Underneath is the olive issue fatigue uniform; web gear consists of the UZI ammunition pouch, grenade pouch, and holster for a Beretta M1951 9mm pistol.

E2: Radioman, 55th Reserve Paratroop Brigade; Jerusalem, June 1967

Advancing through the Old City of Jerusalem, he wears a US M1943 field jacket over French lizard-pattern fatigues. An AN/PRC-10 radio is carried on an infantry packboard, with the handset hooked to

Two soldiers from SAYERET GOLANI watch a suspect building on the outskirts of Kfar Sil, 12 June 1982. The NCO (*right*) wears OG-106 Nomex trousers and Kevlar flak vest, while the officer (*left*) wears olive fatigues, flak vest, and EPHOD gear. Note Orlite infantry ballistic helmet. (IDF Spokesman)

the straps of the tan-netted British jump helmet. A wide array of pouches were carried, including standard IDF canteens, FN, grenade, and US M1943 bandage pouch. The UZI often had two magazines clipped together, crucial for quick reloading during fire-fights.

E3: Recon infantryman, SAYERET GOLANI; Tel Fahar, 8 June 1967

This soldier from the 'Flying Leopards' wears the lizard-pattern camouflage fatigue uniform with the Israeli 'battledress' jacket, worn here as a vest with sleeves crudely removed. The practice of altering uniforms was limited to élite units, who were less likely to be punished upon returning damaged uniforms at the end of their three year service. The weapon is the heavy-barrel squad support FN FAL with bipod; cloth has been wrapped around the barrel and butt to minimize impact noise during movement. The web gear consists of four khaki canvas FN ammunition pouches, and a holster for a Beretta M1951S 9mm pistol.

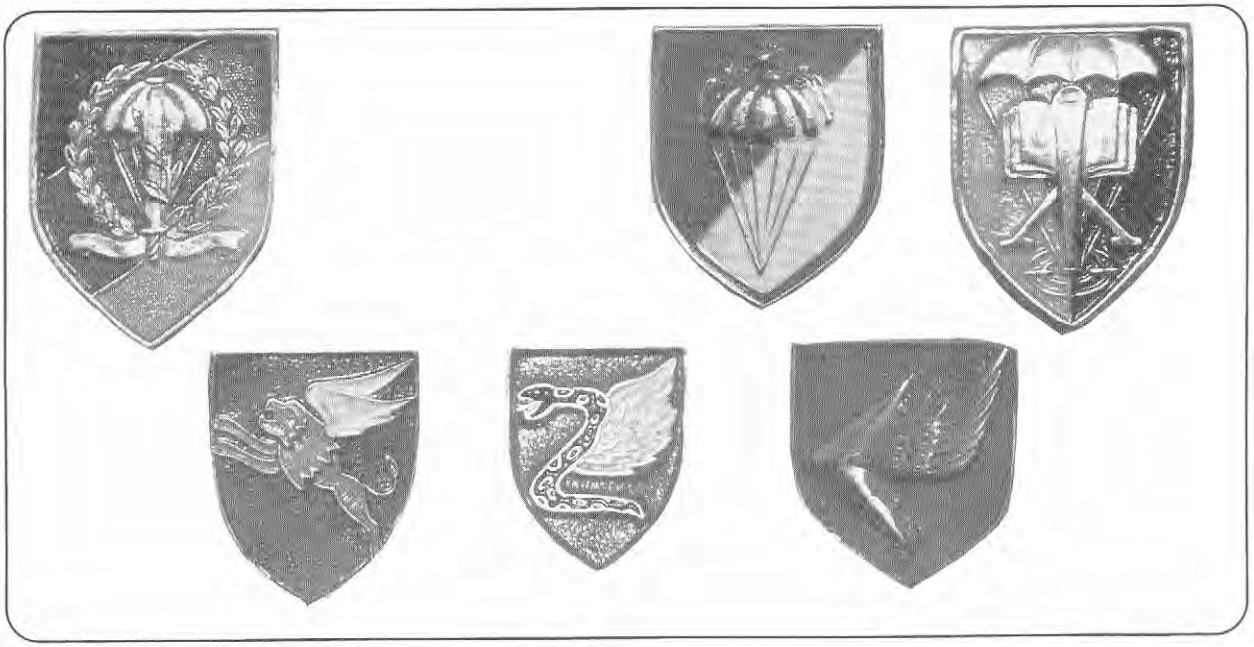
F1: Paratrooper, HA'AN TZANHANIM; Beirut International Airport, 28 December 1968

As no civilians were meant to be hurt in the raid which resulted in the destruction of 13 MEA airliners, paratroop brigade commander Col. Rafael Eitan decided that his men would appear less threatening if dressed in their 'Class A's'—red berets and all! This paratrooper from HA'AN TZANHANIM (the paratroop brigade's demolitions unit) wears the olive four-pocket paratroop Class A smock, called the YARKIT. Basic parachutist wings are worn with blue (regular) background, as is the 1967 campaign ribbon, both above the left breast pocket. The three-pocket Class A trousers (a baggier and finer cotton-blend version of the three-pocket fatigue trousers) are issued only to paratroopers and GOLANI infantrymen. The Russian AK-47 7.62mm assault rifle was captured in such great numbers from the Syrians, Egyptians and Palestinians that it became standard issue to IDF élite units.

F2: Captain, SAYERET HARUV; Jordan Valley, 1968

Although the guerrilla threat posed to the Jordan Valley following the 1967 conquest of the West Bank prompted the IDF to establish the 'Jordan Valley Paratroop Brigade', it was SAYERET HARUV—the reconnaissance paratroop battalion of the IDF Central Command—which led the campaign to halt guerrilla infiltration across the border. This captain, leading his squad to the demolition of a suspected guerrilla hide-out cave (always a tricky and costly operation), carries his portion of the unit's explosives in a green nylon sack. He carries the Chinese version of the AK-47, fitted with a folding bayonet, as well as a PPSH-41 liberated from a guerrilla along the way. The olive fatigue blouse has TZAHAL (Hebrew acronym for Israel Defense Forces) stencilled above the left breast pocket. The AK magazines are carried in a

A paratroop patrol moves through an unidentified Shi'ite village in southern Lebanon in their heavily armed jeep, February 1985. They wear the BEGED HOREF winter coveralls underneath rain smocks, infantry ballistic helmets, and goggles. (Asher Koralik-IDF Spokesman)



Paratroop unit metal tunic badges, in the same designs as the cloth tags worn from left shoulder straps. *Top, left to right:* **Paratroop and Infantry Command—green, red, yellow, silver motif; Jump School—red, white, silver motif; Paratroop and Infantry School—yellow, red V-shaped centre almost hidden by silver motif, green.** *Bottom, left to right:* **55th Reserve Para Bde.—orange lion, white wings, on red ground; 35th Para Bde.—green snake, white wings, on red ground; HATIVAT HABIKA'A—silver 'boomerang' and wings, on red ground. (Author's collection)**

tan canvas pouch captured from Palestinian guerrillas, though later produced in Israel. A US Army flashlight is tucked into the web gear, as is a map. The olive fatigue 'baseball' or 'B-Class' cap is worn; this was issued in great numbers following the 1967 War.

F3: NA'HA'L paratrooper, Ras Arab; 29 October 1969
This paratrooper, involved in some of the diversionary demolitions ops around the radar base's perimeter during Operation 'TARNEGOL 53' ('Chicken 53') wears an olive field jacket which has been bleached tan to resemble an Egyptian uniform. He carries three loads of explosives secured on an infantry packboard by rope. The load-bearing equipment shown here developed years later into the web gear currently worn by the IDF. Consisting of lightweight nylon pouches, its asymmetrical arrangement affords maximum comfort in any firing position. This system was originated by recon paratroopers, who made crude but comfortable pouches out of cut-up fatigues. The FN MAG 7.62mm light machine gun has been in IDF service since the mid-1960s and remains one of the most popular and reliable weapons in the Israeli inventory. Note IDF-issue knee pads.

G1: Naval commando, Green Island; 20 July 1969
This KOMMANDO YAMI wears a specially designed black neoprene rubber summer diving suit, as well as the dark green/grey neoprene rubber equipment vest which was specifically designed by the naval commandos for use on short-duration raids. It consists of waterproof pouches for up to ten UZI magazines, five grenades, and medical and signal equipment. The UZI 9mm SMG with folding stock is carried, and a commercial diver's knife is attached to the right leg.

G2: Recon paratrooper, SAYERET TZANHANIM; Shedwan Island, 22 January 1970
Most IDF combat soldiers possess a double, sometimes even triple weapons rôle. This squad grenadier (note anti-personnel and anti-tank rifle grenades carried) is also the squad medic (note medic's pouch worn on pistol belt). A '37 small pack holding a supply of rifle grenades is worn in addition to the 'commando' load-bearing equipment. Note blinker strobe light attached to the M-1 helmet, which is fitted with tan netting supported by black rubber tubing and has a diagonal strip of white tape for station-keeping.

G3: Second Lieutenant, SAYERET EGOZ; Southern Lebanon, 1972

During the years following the 1967 War, SAYERET EGOZ, the reconnaissance paratroop battalion of the IDF's Northern Command, initiated many week-long ambushes deep inside Lebanon's guerrilla territory. This SEGEN MISHNE wears a US M-65 field jacket over his olive fatigue blouse and US OG-107 fatigue trousers. Foam lining is placed beneath the web gear for comfort. A '37 small pack holds extra ammunition and rations. A US Marine K-Bar knife is crudely attached to the right leg with cloth, and a strobe light is attached to the netted M-1 helmet. Rank is indicated by light tan cloth shoulder strap slides with one green stencilled bar. Note AK-47 with folding stock.

G4: Recon paratrooper, SAYERET MAT'KAL; Lod Airport, 21 May 1972

This member of the IDF's most secretive commando force, preparing to storm the hijacked Sabena airliner, wears white mechanic's coveralls over his olive fatigues. The brown paratroop boots have been quickly polished black, giving a purple appearance, and the weapon used in the assault is the Beretta M1951S.

H1: First Lieutenant, SAYERET SHIRION, 1970

SAYERET SHIRION, the IDF Armoured Corps reconnaissance and mobile anti-tank battalion, was one of the IDF's crack units. They were transferred from division to division depending on where and when their skills were needed. Their main weapon was the jeep-mounted 106mm recoilless rifle, though SAYERET SHIRION often used tanks in long-range reconnaissance rôles. Eventually, they were disbanded, and switched over to the control of the paratroopers, where they serve today in SAYERET OREV.

Although considered an élite unit, the men of SAYERET SHIRION wore average Armoured Corps Class A uniforms, including the unpopular General Services side-pocket trousers. SAYERET SHIRION recon wings (an advancing winged tank) are worn with the green backing indicating reconnaissance duty above the left breast pocket, and below the basic parachutist wings. The black beret bears the Armoured Corps beret badge with a red background; and a red instructor's lanyard is attached to the left breast pocket. On the left breast pocket is the armour qualification badge, and the OT SHERUT MIVTZA'IM (operational service pin) is worn on the right breast pocket. The SIKAT ME'MEM (officer's qualification pin) is worn on the left collar by all officers after their graduation from the officers' course. A Beretta M1951S is tucked into the olive waist belt in typical IDF fashion.

H2: Sergeant candidate, SAYERET GOLANI, 1969

This SAMAL (sergeant) wears the Battledress Class A uniform with the olive Class A blouse underneath. By 1969 the Battledress Class As were virtually obsolete, to be replaced by the olive and khaki variants (e.g. Plate H1). The GOLANI unit tag is worn, as are SAYERET GOLANI 'Flying Leopard' wings and basic parachutist wings. The khaki/green General Services beret was worn by GOLANI until 1976. Nevertheless, SAYERET GOLANI wore black headgear to differentiate themselves from other GOLANI infantrymen. Rank of squad leader candidate is indicated by the blue tape backing for the infantry beret badge, and the shoulder strap loops.

H3: Naval Commando, 1972

This KOMMANDO YAMI wears the white dress uniform, an exact copy of the Navy and Air Force khaki Class A version, worn only on special

A paratrooper loads his gear prior to a training jump, 1986. Note manner in which GALIL ARM fits into weapons bag. (IDF Spokesman)

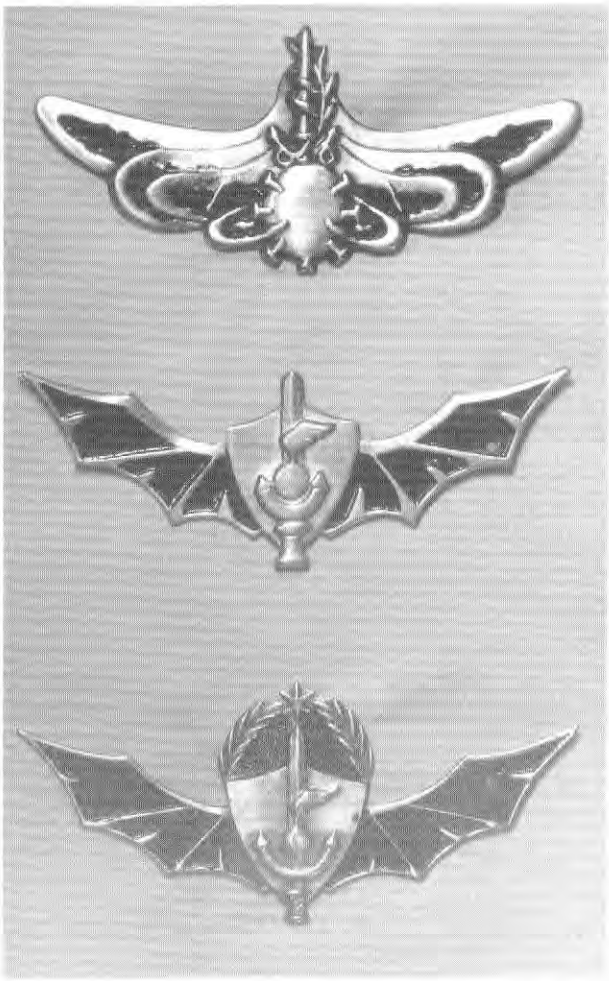
occasions. The Navy's blue beret with gold metal HEYL HAYAM (Navy) beret badge with light blue background was standard Naval Class A headgear for regular soldiers, NCOs, and officers until 1978, when it was replaced by the white 'Popeye' hat for ratings, and white-topped peaked caps for NCOs and officers. The basic Naval Commando KNAFEI ATALEIF ('bat wings') insignia is worn with red (combat) backing over the left breast pocket; while master parachutist wings, indicating over 50 jumps, are worn with green backing above the right breast pocket. The rank of RAV SAMAL RISHON (First Master Sergeant) is indicated by the gold metal sword and wreath crest worn with red backing on a black leather (Navy) watchband; the IDF uses a universal ranking system for all services. The AK-47 with folding stock is this NCO's personal weapon; it replaced the UZI as the Naval Commandos' issued weapon in the late 1960s, and has remained popular in the unit to this day. Although attempts have been made to standardise the GALIL series in Naval Commando service, the 'captured' AKs evoke a certain aura of élite status—besides being extremely effective combat weapons.

I1: Commando, SAYERET MAT'KAL; Beirut, 10 April 1973
Although no photographs have been released from Israel's spectacular commando raid on the Beirut headquarters of the 'Black September' organisation on 10 April 1973, eyewitness accounts and official IDF reports provide an accurate picture of what was actually worn. This commando of one of the 'assassination teams', wears a black civilian turtleneck sweater and a black woollen cap. His face, khaki canvas web gear (with pouches taped shut with black electrical tape for stealthy movement), olive three-pocket fatigue trousers, and '37 small pack have all been greased black for additional camouflage. An IMI M-26 fragmentation grenade and a K-Bar knife are worn on the pistol belt. The UZI 9mm SMG with folding stock has been fitted with an Israeli-produced silencer, and is supported by a khaki canvas sling specifically designed for the UZI, with integral slots for holding magazines.

I2: Second Lieutenant, SAYERET GOLANI; Mt. Hermon, 22 October 1973
This officer inching his way towards Syrian entrenchments on the Israeli Hermon wears the 'Bar-Lev' spring jacket (named after the eighth IDF Chief of Staff, Lt.Gen. Haim Bar-Lev, who popularised its use) with insulated lining and white fur collar. The web gear consists of two UZI magazine pouches, holding up to 20 magazines. Until 1973 the RPG-7 was issued to paratroop and commando units only (it is currently in general IDF service); like the RPG rocket bag, it is from captured Arab stocks.

I3: Recon paratrooper, SAYERET SHAKED; 'The Yard', 16 October 1973
SAYERET SHAKED, the IDF Southern Command's paratroop reconnaissance battalion, was the 'elder statesman' of the territorial commando recon formations. During the 1973 War it was involved in fierce fighting against Egyptian commandos on both banks of the Suez Canal. This SHAKEDNIK preparing to cross the Suez Canal into Egyptian Africa wears the 'German style' life vest, olive fatigue blouse and trousers, M-1 helmet fitted with tan netting supported by black rubber tubing, and brown paratrooper boots. A belt of 7.62mm ammunition for the FN MAG is worn across the chest, and two grenade pouches and a khaki canvas holster (secured to the leg by canvas strips) are worn on the pistol belt. Note the personal graffiti on the vest, ranging from a peace sign to his girlfriend's name.

A National Police sapper gingerly examines a suspicious parcel in Tel Aviv's 'Kings of Israel' Square, January 1986. The Police sappers answer 3,000 such calls annually, and during Israel's involvement in Lebanon were attached to the YA'MA'M. A number were decorated for bravery, some of them posthumously. (Author's collection)



Naval Commando wings, *top to bottom:* Underwater Demolitions Unit, Naval Commando (Basic), Naval Commando (Master). (Author's collection)

J1: Recon infantryman, SAYERET GOLANI; Kfar Sil, 22 June 1982

Seen here with a souvenir portrait of PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat, he wears the IDF load-bearing system or EPHOD, a direct result of experience with the 'commando web gear' of the 1967–70 War of Attrition. The final product is an ingenious and extremely comfortable system, allowing the user to add or remove rear pouches at will. Underneath the EPHOD an Orlite-produced Kevlar flak vest is worn, as are the issue brown/khaki undershirt, here with long sleeves removed, and American OG-107 fatigue trousers. The weapon is the Israeli-produced GALIL 5.56mm ARM, which replaced the FN FAL, UZI, and M-16 as the most important infantry weapon in IDF use. US LAW 66mm anti-tank rockets are carried, with a specially produced LAW carrying pack. By 1982 the old copies of the US M-1 helmet had been replaced by the lightweight Kevlar infantry ballistic helmets, fitted here with tan netting, black rubber tubing, and a red stencil of the unit emblem, the 'Flying Leopard'.

J2: YA'MA'M Border Guard sniper, July 1982

Although the Border Guards possess a fatigue shirt with MISHMAR HAGVUL ('Border Guard') name-tape, their military equipment is identical to that supplied to IDF soldiers. This anti-terrorist sniper preparing an ambush wears the Border Guard fatigue blouse and olive three-pocket fatigue trousers. The Achidatex Ltd. AC-T Kevlar 'anti-terrorist' bulletproof vest can be worn with or without additional protective ceramic plates, affording protection even against armour-piercing bullets. The vest has four ammunition pockets, two front and two rear; a front grenade pouch, and a rear canteen pouch. A Motorola walkie-talkie has been placed in the front ammunition pouch, and a khaki canvas pistol belt supports a holster for a Beretta M1951S, and a Gerber commando knife. The M-16 5.56mm assault rifle has been fitted with a AN/PVS-4 sniper-scope and a 30-round magazine.

J3: Recon paratrooper, SAYERET TZANHANIM; I'tha E-Zut, 1985

The harsh winters in Lebanon prompted the IDF to issue protective clothing. Two such articles were the HERMONIOT fur-lined winter boots, and the one-piece BEGED HOREF insulated winter suit here worn under an issue OG protective rain smock. This recon paratrooper—operating from M113 APCs—presents a distinctively armoured crewman's appearance. He wears the Type 602 Kevlar armour crewman protective helmet (with blinker strobe light attached, as well as a pack of foreign cigarettes taped to the front for easy access). The load-bearing equipment is a variation of the current EPHOD designed specifically for armoured crewmen, and called EPHOD HEYL SHIRION (Armoured Corps web gear). It consists of four frontal pouches similar to the 'ChiCom' type, and accommodates two rectangular canteens, providing the crewman with greater comfort while operating in the confines of an armoured vehicle. The stretcher, carried

attached to an infantry packboard, suggests that the soldier has temporarily left the 'security' of the M113. Note GLILON with M203 grenade launcher; and 'liberated' Russian TT-33 pistol tucked into web gear.

K1: Second Lieutenant, YA'MA'M, 1985
Seen here during a training exercise, this officer wears the Border Guards' dark green beret with National Police badge. The Border Guard 'battle-dress' jacket with green fur collar is worn with the MISHMAR HAGVUL emblem sewn to the upper left arm, above the pen pocket. For protection against tear gas the SHALON Type 80 gas mask is worn, as is the IDF (note TZAHAL stencil) NBC warfare bag strapped to the left leg. The police rank of MEFAKEACH MISHNE is indicated by a small jewelled leaf worn on green shoulder boards. The weapon is the 9mm 'mini-UZI', a small version of the famous UZI SMG which, although it has not been adopted by the IDF, has undergone extensive testing in the Border Guard.

K2: Corporal, 50th NA'HA'L Paratroop Battalion; Hebron 1986
Carrying out the unpopular security duty on the West Bank, he wears the olive fatigues and the DUBON parka. The DUBON is extremely warm, waterproof, and comfortable; the hood has slits for use with headphones, and a pistol pocket is placed near the upper left sleeve. The KOVA RAFUL (named after former Chief of Staff Lt.Gen. Rafael 'Raful' Eitan) fatigue hat with TZAHAL nametape is worn, as is an olive fatigue blouse and three-pocket fatigue trousers. The rank of RABAT is indicated by two stripes sewn on to the sleeves. An AN/PRC-77 field radio is carried on the back in a tan-khaki canvas rucksack, the handset secured by the snug-fitting web gear. The NA'HA'L tag is worn attached to the left shoulder strap, and the paratrooper's red beret is tucked into the web gear. The GALIL 5.56mm AR (a long-barrelled version of the GLILON SAR) is carried, as is a bull-horn. The NA'HA'L maintains one paratroop battalion, complete with a reconnaissance company, under the command of the 35th Paratroop Bde.

K3: Senior master sergeant, SAYERET HADRUZIM, 1986
This RA'SA'B from the airborne-qualified and

Naval Commandos set out for a training operation near Atlit, July 1986. Note black neoprene rubber diving suits, and modified oxygen breathing system. (IDF Spokesman)

trained reconnaissance unit of the 300th Brigade (the IDF's minority combat brigade, made up of Druze Muslim conscripts as well as Bedouin, Christian and Circassian volunteers) wears the General Service Class A blouse, and paratroop Class A three-pocket trousers—a combination well within the restraints of regulations. Master parachutist wings with green backing are worn above the left breast pocket, below which are worn the SAYERET HADRUZIM recon wings, and a row of the 1967, 1973 and 1982 Lebanon campaign ribbons. The 'woolly pully' sweater entered IDF service following the 1982 Lebanon War when thousands were captured; it is seen here modified with a frontal zipper fitted with a grenade pin. Rank is indicated by the gold-embroidered red cloth patch sewn on both sleeves. The CAR-15 5.56mm assault rifle is the favoured weapon of paratroop and infantry NCOs and officers.

L1: Paratroop jump instructor, Tel Nof, 1987
The rank of master sergeant has always carried a negative reputation; and it was felt that the highly visible 'watchband ranks' contributed to this image. As a result, on Independence Day 1986, the IDF officially changed the rank insignia for all these NCOs from the large metal insignia worn on the left wrist to smaller, more discreet rank badges worn on the collar, with a red backing for Army, light blue

The next generation of IDF élite, a GIVA'ATI Brigade SHU'ALEI SHIMSHON unit assaults a target in manoeuvres against the GOLANI Brigade in the Negev Desert. Note soldier carrying GLILON SAR with added forward pistol grip, and sniper in background firing an M-21. (IDF Spokesman)

for Air Force, and dark blue for Navy. This MADRICH TZNICHA (jump instructor) wears the paratroop Class A blouse, incorporating an olive waist belt. Master parachutist wings are worn above the left breast pocket, and HALO jump wings below the left collar, both with white backing indicating instructor status. The Lebanon ribbon is worn above the left breast pocket, and the operational service pin on the right breast pocket. Attached to the left shoulder strap is the unit tag for the Paratroop Jump School; the red beret, infantry beret badge, and brown boots are all universal paratrooper items. The white long-sleeved undershirt is the issue 'winter sleeping garment', worn here as a 'fashionable' T-shirt.

L2: First Lieutenant, Air Force Aeromedical Evacuation Unit, 1987

The men of the Aeromedical Evacuation Unit are responsible for the immediate and successful rescue of any downed pilot, or combat soldiers trapped deep in enemy territory. Completely airmobile with a variety of helicopters, their most effective weapon is speed, and the ability to operate in any topographical or climatic environment. They are familiar with every weapon in the enemy's possession, and are experts in hand-to-hand combat, quick infiltration, and extraction—even cross-country skiing!

This SEGEN wears the Air Force khaki Class A uniform, with a grey/blue officer's waist belt with silver metal buckle. The grey/blue officer's peaked cap is worn, with silver metal HEYL HAVIR (Air Force) badge with red backing. Like the Air Force pilot wings, the AEU wings are embroidered in silver on a dark blue cloth base, and worn over the left breast pocket. Rank is indicated by two silver metal bars, identical to the Army ranks, worn on a grey/blue shoulder board without any backing. Note officer's qualification pin worn on the left collar. The personal weapon is the AKMS 7.62mm assault rifle, supported by a black canvas sling.

L3: Sergeant, SHU'ALEI SHIMSHON, 1987

When the GIVA'ATI Infantry Brigade was 'reborn' in 1983 out of the remnants of SAYERET SHAKED as the IDF's version of a marine infantry force, the re-emergence of its historical reconnaissance unit, SHU'ALEI SHIMSHON ('Samson's Foxes') was inevitable. Although originally issued with black berets, when GIVA'ATI emerged as the élite IDF infantry

formation—outperforming both the paratroopers and the GOLANI in mock combat exercises—they were awarded the honour of their own distinctive purple beret. The Intelligence Corps badge worn with red backing on the beret indicates that this SHU'ALEI SHIMSHON sergeant is attached an Intelligence unit. SHU'ALEI SHIMSHON recon wings with green backing are worn over the left breast pocket, and the GIVA'ATI Brigade unit pin is attached to the left pocket; a green instructor's lanyard is fastened to it. The GLILON 5.56mm SAR is seen here fitted with a forward pistol grip, and loaded with the unusual 50-round magazine. A Beretta M92 9mm pistol is tucked into the olive waist belt. Note IDF-issue kit bag.

An Aeromedical Evacuation Unit Bell 212 pilot displays his American K-2B sage green flight suit, dark green SPH-4C single-visor helmet, and Israeli-produced survival gear pouches. (Herzl Kunesari-IDF Spokesman)

Notes sur les planches en couleur

A1 Combinaison d'articles britanniques, civils et HAGANAH, dont la casquette de style turc de la *Jewish Settlement Police*. Le fusil Lewis peu courant n'est utilisé que dans les grandes batailles. **A2** Blouse de camouflage de l'ancienne 6ème Division aéroportée britannique, étuis de munitions de l'armée des Etats-Unis et pantalons civils. Le fusil Lee Enfield, le pistolet P38 et la grenade se complètent d'un lance-flammes de fabrication IRGUN. **A3** Le dispositif lance-grenades du fusil et le 'fusil Sten' sont de fabrication HAGANAH.

B1 Habit israélien et insigne de parachutiste TZAHAL; le reste de la tenue est de fabrication britannique, à l'exception de la mitraillette MP40. **B2** Ancien uniforme copié sur une tenue de combat britannique. A noter l'insigne de parachutiste brodé remplacé par un insigne en métal à partir de 1953. Remarquer les galons de sergent rudimentaires, le ruban de la campagne de 1948 et le fusil tchèque K98. **B3** Tenue de combat standard portée en guise d'uniforme jusqu'au milieu des années soixante-dix; l'écusson de l'unité de métier de parachutistes est ici cousu sur la manche au lieu d'être porté sous la forme d'un rabat amovible; le col est orné de deux insignes TZAHAL et les pattes d'épaule d'insignes de grade en bronze placées les unes comme les autres sur un fond rouge. Le cordon rouge désigne les instructeurs.

C1 Cette unité portait une gamme bigarrée d'habits et de matériels d'équipement: dans ce cas, un couvre-chef de type britannique, une blouse de camouflage britannique et des pantalons israéliens. La copie israélienne d'un sac britannique renferme une réserve de munitions pour un fusil Bren. **C2** Autre mélange caractéristique d'habits et de matériel, de fabrication en grande partie israélienne, à l'exception du foulard arabe porté comme une écharpe. **C3** Vêtements israéliens, mélange de matériel britannique et des USA et dispositif lance-grenades sur le fusil K98.

D1 Aujourd'hui beaucoup plus élégant, l'uniforme est de fabrication entièrement israélienne à l'exception du casque britannique. Remarquer l'étui pour dix magasins, une ancienne mitraillette UZI et un pistolet 0.38 Smith & Wesson dans son fourreau. **D2** Uniforme et matériel d'équipement israélien standard, comprenant des étuis pour les magasins FN FAL; copie de sac britannique renfermant des explosifs; gamelles dont les couvercles servent souvent à porter des grenades. **D3** Habit de camouflage 'lézard' de provenance française, casque et parachutes de type américan; le grand sac d'armes renferme un bazooka de 3.5 in. de fabrication locale, et le petit l'UZI, sous le parachute de réserve.

E1 Tenue de camouflage 'lézard' portée par-dessus une veste au col de fourrure; étuis pour magasins et grenades UZI; pistolet M1951 Beretta dans son fourreau. **E2** Veste de campagne M1943 américaine et uniforme de camouflage français; radio AN/PRC-10 sur le 'packboard' de l'infanterie; casque britannique. **E3** Ce mitrailleur léger porte cet anorak que les Israéliens appellent 'battledress', ici sans ses manches, par-dessus un uniforme de camouflage 'lézard'; les touches personnelles telles que celle-ci étaient courantes parmi les unités d'élite.

F1 L'uniforme de 'Classe A' était porté de façon à ne pas trop surprendre les civils. La coupe de la veste (et des pantalons) est particulière aux troupes de parachutistes (et GOLANI). Tous les parachutistes engagés portent un insigne sur fond bleu; remarquer également le ruban de la campagne de 1967. De

Farbtafeln

A1 Kombination britischer, ziviler und HAGANAH-Stücke, inkl. Kappe der Jewish Settlement Police in türkischem Stil. Das seltene Lewis-Gewehr würde nur in grossangelegten Gefechten riskiert werden. **A2** Tarnkittel, ex-britisch, 6. Airborne Division, US-Armme-Munitionsgürtel und Zivilhosen. Das Lee Enfield-Gewehr, die P 38-Pistole und Granate werden durch einen von IRGUN hergestellten Flammenwerfer ergänzt. **A3** Die Granatwerfervorrichtung auf dem Gewehr und das Sten-Maschinengewehr wurden von der HAGANAH hergestellt.

B1 Israelische Kleidung, und TZAHAL-Fallschirmjägerabzeichen; Rest der Ausrüstung ist britischer herkunft, abgesehen von der MP40-Maschinenpistole. **B2** Frühe formelle Uniform, der britischen kampuniform nachgemacht; siehe gesticktes Fallschirmjägerabzeichen, 1953 durch Metallabzeichen ersetzt. Siehe grobe Gefreitenstreifen, Band für Feldzug 1948 und tschechisches K98-Gewehr. **B3** Standard-Felduniform, als formelle Uniform getragen bis Mitte der 70er Jahre; Schulterabzeichen der regulären Fallschirmjägereinheit ist hier am Ärmel aufgenäht, anstatt als abnehmbare Klappe getragen; am Kragen zwei TZAHAL-Abzeichen, auf den Schulterklappen bronzene Rangabzeichen, beide auf rotem Grund. Die rote Schnur kennzeichnet Instruktor.

C1 Diese Einheit trug eine bunte Auswahl von Kleidungsstücken und Ausrüstung: in diesem Falle eine britische Kappe, britischen Tarnkittel und israelische Hosen. Die israelische Kopie britischer Gurten enthält Reservemunition für eine Bren-Maschinenpistole. **C2** Ebenfalls eine typische Mischung von Kleidungsstücken und Ausrüstung, hauptsächlich israelischer Herkunft, abgesehen von dem arabischen Kopftuch, als Halstuch getragen. **C3** Israelische Kleidung, Mischung aus britischer und US-Ausrüstung, israelische Granatwerfervorrichtung auf dem K98-Gewehr.

D1 Jetzt schon viel eleganter—die Uniform ist rein israelisch, abgesehen vom britischen helm. Siehe Gurt für 10 Magazine, frühe UZI-Maschinenpistole, Pistole Smith & Wesson .38 in Halfter. **D2** Israelische Standarduniform und Ausrüstung, inkl. Gurten für FN FAL-Magazine; kopierter britischer Sprengstoffbeutel; Feldflaschen, deren Hüllen oft zur Aufbewahrung von Granaten verwendet werden. **D3** Lizard-Tarnkleidung französischer herkunft, Helm amerikanischer Art und Fallschirme; der grössere Waffenbehälter enthält eine lokal angefertigte 3,5 Zoll-Bazooka, der kleinere unter dem Reservefallschirm die UZI.

E1 Lizard-Tarnanzug über Jacke mit Penzkragen; Gurten für UZI-Magazine und Granaten; gehalfterte Beretta M1951-Pistole. **E2** US-Feldjacke M1943 und französische Tarnuniform; AN/PRC-10-Funkgerät auf Infanterie-Packboard; britischer helm. **E3** Dieser leichte Maschinengewehrschütze trägt die israelische sog. Battledress-Windjacke, hier mit abgeschnittenen Ärmeln, über Lizard-Tarnuiform; solche persönliche Variationen waren unter den Elite-Einheiten üblich.

F1 'Class' A'—Uniform wurde getragen, um die Zivilbevölkerung nicht zu erschrecken! Der Schnitt der jacke und Hosen ist typisch für die Fallschirmjäger- und GOLANI-Truppen. Alle regulären Paras tragen Schwingen auf blauem Grund; siehe auch das Band für den Feldzug 1967. Viele Eliteeinheiten tragen AK-47 Gewehre. **F2** Die Arbeitsbluse mit gelbem TZAHAL-Aufdruck und Arbeitskappe wurden nach dem Krieg von 1967 allgemein getragen. Er trägt

nombreuses unités d'élite ont des fusils AK-47. **F2** La tenue de corvée décorée de lettres TZAHAL jaunes, et la casquette assortie, se répandirent après la guerre de 1967. Ce soldat porte des armes et des étuis saisis à l'ennemi ou copiés sur ceux de l'ennemi; ses explosifs sont dans un sac vert en nylon. **F3** Veste teinte en ocre pour ressembler à l'uniforme égyptien; les explosifs se trouvent sur le 'packboard'; prototype de matériel d'équipement léger, aujourd'hui de fabrication standard mais réalisé à l'origine par les parachutistes à partir de tissu d'uniforme; et remarquer les genouillères.

G1 A noter le matériel d'équipement imperméable mis au point pour les commandos navals. **G2** La plupart des soldats israéliens ont deux spécialités de combat; cet homme porte à la fois un étui médical et des grenades anti-personnel et antichar. Remarquer le clignotant fixé au casque pour les opérations nocturnes. **G3** Veste de terrain M-65 et pantalons OG-107 américains, casque de type américain et de fabrication locale, et matériel d'équipement doublé de caoutchouc mousse. **G4** Tireur d'élite de cette unité secrète qui se prépare à délivrer des otages retenus dans un avion de ligne détourné; il porte un combinaison blanche de mécanicien aéronautique et il est armé d'un Beretta M1951.

H1 Cet homme porte le béret et l'insigne du corps blindé, l'insigne de parachutiste ainsi que celle, propre à cette unité, représentant un char ailé sur le fond vert de toutes les unités de reconnaissance. A noter l'insigne de grade d'officier sur la partie gauche du col, celui de grade au sein du corps blindé sur la poche gauche et celui du service opérationnel sur la poche droite. **H2** Insigne d'unité GOLANI sur l'épaule de la tenue de combat 'Classe A', presque obsolète en 1969; béret noir SAYERET GOLANI et, sur la poitrine, insigne d'unité de reconnaissance représentant un léopard volant; le candidat sous-officier se reconnaît à une ganse bleue qui orne son béret et ses pattes d'épaule. **H3** Uniforme de cérémonie et béret porté par la marine avant 1978. L'insigne 'en ailes de chauve-souris' du commando de la marine possède un fond rouge qui indique un service de combat, alors que celui 'en ailes de parachute' a le fond vert des unités de reconnaissance. L'insigne de grade se porte au poignet, sur un bracelet montre.

I1 Selon des témoins oculaires, ce costume à moitié civil aurait été porté lors de ce raid nocturne. Remarquer l'UZI accompagné d'un silencieux. **I2** Veste dite 'Bar-Lev' d'après le nom du général qui en répandit l'utilisation. Les RPG-7 sont désormais communs. **I3** Brassière de sauvetage de style allemand utilisée pour franchir le canal de Suez.

J1 L'équipement EPHOD, que les commandos ont été les premiers à utiliser (Voir F3), est désormais standard; il est ici porté par-dessus le gilet pare-balles *Kevlar*. A cette date, le casque *Kevlar* avait remplacé l'ancient casque de type américain; à remarquer l'insigne du 'léopard volant'; les armes sont un fusil GALIL ARM et des fusées des Etats-Unis LAW-66. **J2** Mélange d'uniforme de garde-frontières et d'équipement militaire; le gilet pare-balles AC-T 'anti-terroriste' peut recevoir des plaques céramiques en vue d'une protection accrue, et ses étuis peuvent renfermer des munitions et une radio, en cas de besoin. **J3** La tenue d'hiver et les bottes mises au point pour les opérations menées au Liban par temps froid s'accompagnent ici d'une veste imperméable; le casque et le matériel d'équipement ici d'une veste imperméable; le casque et le matériel d'équipment sont destinés tout particulièrement aux équipes d'appareils transporteurs blindés. Cet homme porte un fusil GLILON accompagné d'un lance-grenades et, sur son dos, un brancard.

K1 Béret et insigne de garde-frontières, et veste *battledress* verte avec écusson de garde-frontières; masque à gaz et trousse chimique sur la jambe gauche; insigne de rang sur les pattes d'épaule, et 'mini-UZI' propre aux gardes-frontières. **K2** L'insigne HATAL sur la manche désigne cette unité de la 35ème brigade parachutiste; noter la parka d'hiver DUBON, le fusil GALIL AR et la radio AN/PRC-77. **K3** L'unité de reconnaissance de la 300ème brigade, constituée de races minoritaires, possède un insignie spécial en forme d'ailes que ses membres portent ici au-dessous de l'insigne de parachutiste; remarquer le pullover à fermeture éclair, le fusil CAR-15 et l'insigne de grade cousu sur les poignets.

L1 Nouvel insigne de rang de 1986: placé au col, il remplace celui de type bracelet-montre. Le maître-parachute et les ailes HALO sont placés sur le fond blanc de l'insigne de l'instructeur; le'écusson désigne l'Ecole de saut en parachute. **L2** Uniforme 'Classe A' de l'armée de l'air avec, sur la poitrine gauche, l'insigne de l'Unité d'évacuation aéromédicale, et l'insigne de grade habituel. **L3** L'insigne du Service de renseignments porté sur le nouveau béret violet de la brigade GIVA'ATI indique que l'homme appartient à une unité de renseignements au sein de la brigade. Le cordon vert de l'instructeur s'attache à l'insigne GIVA'ATI épinglé sur la poitrine en-dessous des ailes de reconnaissance de cette unité.

Waffen und Gurten, die vom Feind erbeutet oder kopiert wurden, und Sprengstoff in einem grünen Nylonsack. **F3** Braun gefärbte Jacke soll ägyptische Uniform vortäuschen; Sprengstoffe auf Packboard getragen; Prototyp leichter Gurtausrüstung, jetzt Standardausrüstung, aber ursprünglich von Fallschirmjägern selbstverfertigt aus Uniformstoff; siehe Kneischützer.

G1 Siehe spezielle wasserdichte Ausrüstung für Marinekommandos. **G2** Die meisten israelischen Soldaten haben zwei Einsatzspezialitäten; dieser Mann trägt sowohl einen Medizinbeutel sowie Splitter und Panzerabwehrgranaten. Siehe Blinklicht am Helm für Nachteinsätze. **G3** US-M-65-Feldjacke und OG-107-Hosen, lokal hergestellter Helm nach US-Art; Gurten mit Schaumgummi gepolstert. **G4** Der Scharfschütze dieser geheimen Abteilung ist im begriffe, Geiseln in einem entführten Flugzeug zu retten; er trägt weissen Overall eines Flugzeugmechanikers und ist mit Beretta M1951 bewaffnet.

H1 Panzerkorps-Kappe mit Abzeichen, ausserdem Fallschirmjägerschwingen und das spezielle Panzerabzeichen dieser Einheit auf dem grünen Grund aller Aufklärungseinheiten. Siehe Offizierspatentabzeichen auf der linken Kragenseite; Panzerpatentabzeichen, linke Tasche, und Einsatzabzeichen, rechte tasche. **H2** Abzeichen der GOLANI-Einheit auf der Schulter der 'Class A'-Battledress, seit 1969 fast überflüssig geworden; schwarze Kappe SAYERET GOLANI, und Aufklärungsschwinge 'Fliegender Leopard' auf der Brust; Unteroffizierskandidat gekennzeichnet durch auf Kappe und Schulterspange. **H3** Formelle Uniform und Kappe der Marine vor 1978. Blaues Fledermausflügel-Kommandoabzeichen auf rotem Grund zeigt Kampfeinsatz an; Para-Schwingenauf grünem Aufklärergrund. Rangabzeichen auf Uhrarmband getragen.

I1 Augenzeugenberichten zufolge wurde dieses halbzivile Kostüm bei diesem nächtlichen Angriff getragen. Siehe UZI mit Schalldämpfer. **I2** Die Sog. Bar-Lev-Jacke, nach dem general, der ihre Verwendung populär machte. RPG-7 sind jetzt allgemein getragen. **I3** Schwimmweste deutscher Art wird beim Übersetzen des Suezkanals getragen.

J1 Die EPHOD-Ausrüstung, von den Kommandos (siehe F3) eingeführt, gehört zur Standardausrüstung, hier über der Kevlar-Panzerweste getragen. Der Kevlar-Helm hat jetzt den früheren US-artigen Helm ersetzt—siehe Aufdruck des Abzeichens 'Fliegender Leopard'; GALIL ARM-Gewehr und US LAW-66-Raketen. **J2** Mischung aus Grenzwache-Uniform und Armeeausrüstung; die AC-T-Panzerweste gegen Terroristen kann zusätzliche Keramikplatten aufnehmen für grösseren Schutz, und in den Gurten kann Munition und Funkgerät getragen werden. **J3** Winteranzug und Stiefel für Kaltwettereinsätze im Libanon, mit Regenjacke; Helm und Gurten für die besatzung gepanzerter Truppentransporter. Er trägt ein GLILON-Gewehr mit Granatwerfer, und am Rücken eine Bahre.

K1 Grenzwache-Kappe und Abzeichen und grüne Battledress-Jacke mit Grenzwache-Schulterabzeichen; Gasmaske und Ausrüstung für chemische Kriegführung in Beutel am linken Bein; Rangabzeichen auf Schulterspangen; Mini-UZI, typisch für Grenzwachen. **K2** NAHAL-Abzeichen am Ärmel identifiziert diese Einheit der 35. Para-Brigade; siehe DUBON-Pelzjacke, GALIL AR-Gewehr und AN/PRC-77-Funkgerät. **K3** Die Aufklärungseinheit der 300.Brigade, aus völkischen Minoritäten zusammengesetzt, mit spezieller Schwinge unter den Para-Schwingen; siehe Pullover mit Reissverschluss, CAR-15-Gewehr und aufgenähte Rangabzeichen auf den Manschetten.

L1 Neue Rangabzeichen (1986) am Kragen ersetzen die Armbandabzeichen. Schwingen für geübten Fallschirmjäger und HALO auf dem weissen Grund des Instruktors getragen; Schulterabzeichen identifiziert Fallschirmjägerschule. **L2** 'Class-A'-Luftwaffeuniform mit Schwinge der Aeromedical Evacuation -Einheit links auf der Brust, normale Rangabzeichen. **L3** Nachrichtendienstabzeichen, getragen auf der neuen, violetten Kappe der GIVA'ATI-Brigade, zeigt eine nachrichtendiensteinheit der Brigade an. Grüne Schnur des Instruktors ist an GIVA'ATI-Abzeichen an der Brust unterhalb der Aufklärungsschwinge dieser Einheit befestigt.

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